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REINVENTING THE PAST

How London keeps its traditions alive



- Stephen Bayley
- James Ogilvy
- Simon Mills
- Nicholas Foulkes
- Stephen Glover
- Celestria Noel

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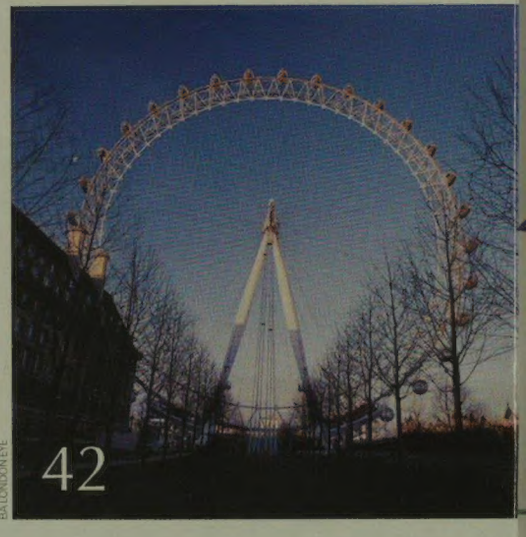
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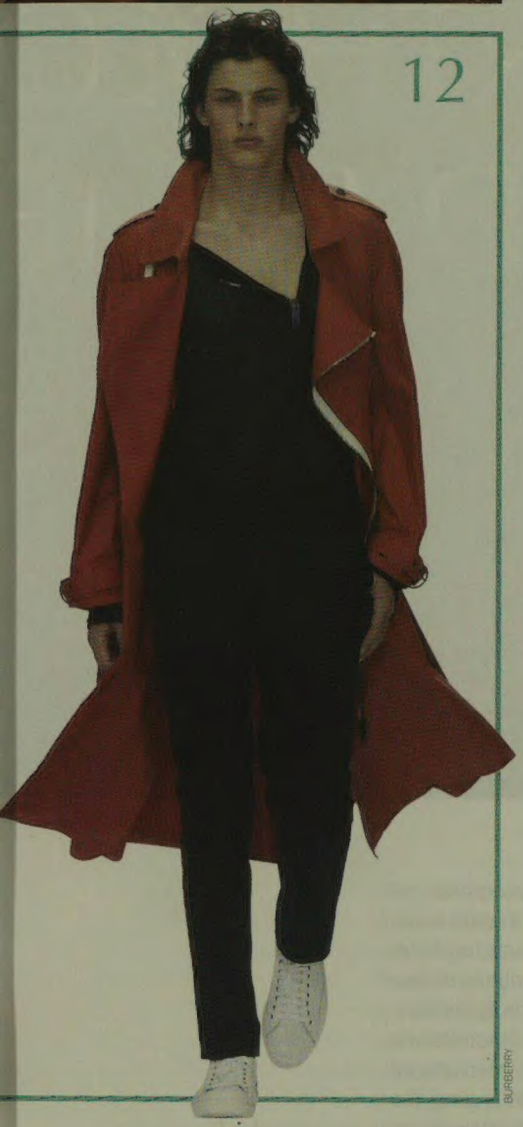
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A taste for tradition

What is it about the British that makes us love a good get-together with a bit of pomp and ceremony? As this summer approaches, not only are we gearing up for the start of the Season, when all the best frocks and hats come out, but we're also celebrating the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation, one of the most elaborate and stately ceremonies ever. The British penchant for donning best bib and tucker and going out to celebrate, come rain or shine, is examined by Stephen Bayley in his article on p6, and gives us our cue for the theme of this issue.

We've been inspired to delve into other aspects of British custom, and to look at how centuries-old traditions are reinventing themselves. James Ogilvy talks about some of the grand old shops of London that have undergone modern make-overs. Simon Mills explores our love of exclusive members' clubs and finds out what the newest kids on the block are doing to keep their celebrity clientele keen. Nick Foulkes visits some of London's most traditional hotels, such as Claridges and The Berkeley, and scarcely recognises them.

We also consider why the Brits have always been keen explorers, dropping everything to set off on far-flung adventures; we take an affectionate look at the tradition of afternoon tea; and, in honour of the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest, suggest places in the capital where you can do some climbing of your own. Finally, Stephen Glover discusses the British press—for years revered around the world, but what is its standing now?

From the archives we show the *ILN*'s special coverage of the coronation in 1953 and take a look at some of the dramatic drawings commissioned from famous war artists through the centuries.

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The Titian nude: revealing all about high art in Italy.

ITALY GOT TITIAN AND PALLADIO AND WE GOT BARTHOLOMEW FAIR AND REMEMBRANCE DAY



Going to Bartholomew Fair: just a barrel of laughs.

The British love the spectacle and ceremony of national festivities, and find any excuse to celebrate. Stephen Bayley looks at our rituals and traditions, from coronations to music awards, and wonders what events we will celebrate in the future.

WHY THE BRITS LOVE TRADITION

THE ENGLISH, it has been said, not being a spiritual nation, had to invent cricket to afford themselves some concept of eternity. And they performed a similar trick with spectacles and traditions.

Also being decidedly unappreciative of the visual arts, the same race had—historically—to create pompous events and regular circuses to approximate to the art which other (more aesthetically inclined) nations naturally enjoyed. Thus Italy got Titian and Palladio and we got the puppets and four-footed geese of Bartholomew Fair as well as state funerals, coronations, Remembrance Day and the State Opening of Parliament.

Plus, I suppose you might add in a melancholy vein, the UK's much-hyped music industry awards the Brits and the doomed Dome of Greenwich. These all betray something of the national character and its preoccupations. A foreign visitor to London who had seen Nelson's funeral told the gossipy painter Benjamin Robert Haydon that it showed two things: the nation's generosity and its "utter want of taste".

The most spectacularly generous and tasteless of all English events is a coronation, although these are rare. "Of these civic sspectacles," the Chinese author of *Some Observations upon the Civilization of the Western Barbarians* (1876) observed, "the coronation is supreme." Take Henry VIII, as many unfortunate wives did. Henry Tudor's coronation in 1509 occurred on "midsummer's daie". The noble prince and his queen *du jour* were carried under canopies on litters borne by the masters of the Cinque Ports (the five Kent and Sussex towns which, since the 12th century, had been granted special privileges on account of their part in defending the Channel). The prince and his bride arrived at Westminster Abbey "upon cloth of raie", but—as is the nature of these things—so popular was the event, and so inebriated and incontinent the crowd, that the same cloth was "cut and spoiled by the rude and common people".

Victoria was not amused to be woken on the morning of her own coronation in 1838 by guns going off in the park. But this was not the Victoria who turned into a stern curmudgeon, but a bright and innocent young princess excited by a "curious spectacle".

"I really cannot say how proud," she wrote in her journal, "I feel to be the Queen of such a nation." No rude and common people here, then, but Henry VIII would have recognised the scene Princess Victoria described: "I was alarmed at times for fear that the people would be crushed and squeezed on account of the tremendous rush and pressure." Again there was generosity and tastelessness inside Westminster Abbey. Here there were eight train bearers carrying Victoria's crimson and traditional dalmatic robes. When the crown was placed on her head, she confessed to "a most beautiful, impressive moment" while her Lord Melbourne, evidently the sensitive type, "was completely overcome".

Moving to the present, it is irresistible to speculate on the style that the Coronation of King Charles III will take—especially given the current heir's love of pompous tradition in bizarre harness with a more attractive wacky modernism. The great mechanisms of state ceremony may need to find a method of engaging with organic farming, picturesque town planning and alternative therapies. Presumably, teams of ceremonial experts are working on this right now. They will no doubt be debating the fashion, but one thing is certain: when the day comes, the global audience will be enormous.

Funerals are at least as dramatic as coronations. In 1658, Oliver Cromwell was laid in state at Somerset House in conditions of puritanical blackness, heavy drapes keeping out all the natural light. Thin wax tapers added to the dramatically austere effect. A century later Horace Walpole described the lying in state of George II in 1760, by which time funerals had lightened up a bit. The prince's chamber was hung with purple and lit by innumerable silver lamps. The coffin was under a canopy of purple velvet and six vast silver chandeliers. The lot was surrounded by footguards, each of the 71 of them holding a burning torch. Drums were muffled, bells tolled mournfully, guns went off every minute.

A century after that—a mere 20 or so years after Victoria's coronation—her Consort Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, died. England had been surprised into a very great affection for Albert, made the more keen by the suddenness of his loss at only 42.

Victoria, with the nation following, was plunged into a state of impenetrable mourning, which quickly became the national state. The equally sudden loss of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997 demonstrated the native genius for grand ceremonial.

Diana's death was shockingly unexpected but, at tragically short notice, a ceremony of stirring gravitas and eroticised dignity was conjured out of nothing. No traffic moved and, for a handful of haunting hours, London was transformed into a city of the past.

Both traditional, yet in rapid response to breaking news, Diana's funeral was a unique spectacle and

BBC TOPICAL/CAMERA PRESS/HULTON ARCHIVE



A glittering occasion: those leading lights of British pageantry, the Yeoman of the Guard, solemnly go about their ceremonial search for dastardly villains of the piece before the State Opening of Parliament.

curiously descriptive of the national mood on the eve of the new millennium.

But, besides gloomy funerals there were always jolly fairs. The one at Greenwich caught Dickens' eye and he described it in *Sketches by Boz* (1836). "A three days fever, which cools the blood for six months afterwards, and at the expiration of which London is restored to its old habits of plodding industry."

London's Mayfair is built, as you would expect, on the site of the May Fair and local streets, such as Shepherd Market, echo history. St Margaret's Fair in Southwark fascinated the diarist John Evelyn who found "...an Italian wench daunce and performe tricks on the high rope to admiration...like these here as a man who tooke up a piece of iron cannon of about 400lbs wight in the haire of his head onlie."

But the most notorious gathering was Bartholomew Fair, memorialised in Ben Jonson's 1614 play. This riotous event ran from 1133 to 1752 at Smithfield and eventually moved to Islington where it was last held in 1855 (on the site that became Caledonian Market). It had a splendid reputation for debauchery and violence so, naturally, the Puritans tried (and happily failed) to suppress it. A 17th-century source said its "main importance...is not so much the merchandise and the supplying what people really want; but as a sort of Bacchanalia, to gratify the multitude in their wandering and irregular thoughts". Bartholomew Fair was reliably full of corners of lewdness and impurity and populated by mountebanks, pickpockets and acting fools. Samuel Pepys only felt comfortable there with his wife and described it all as "dirty sport" while conceding "at a little distance it had been admirable".

Today, such fairs have been replaced by other, continuous, forms of mass entertainment (shopping malls, for example), but a taste for national celebration remains (in the official mentality, if not always in popular taste). The Millennium Dome was a nostalgic grasp at recreating a lively, popular ceremonial...but the show had already moved on. A generation used to 75 television channels was no longer much moved by a static circus.

Of all surviving ceremonials, Changing the Guard is the most familiar. Once described to me by a Japanese visitor with an imperfect grasp of the language as "The

C P SNOW—THINKING OF DRUIDS, WELSH NATIONAL COSTUME AND MORRIS DANCING—SAID MOST TRADITIONS WERE INVENTIONS OF THE 19TH CENTURY.



Splashing out: two sacred British traditions get the full-on Glastonbury Festival treatment—never allowing the vagaries of an English summer to dampen our spirits and the ability to form a conga line at the drop of a hat.

Altering of the Overcoats", Changing the Guard takes place at 11.30 in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace. The guards are led by an Ensign, traditionally the youngest officer, who, in a bravura display of discipline, has, while marching, to lower the colour in order to salute the Relieving Officer (as he is amusingly called). The new guard takes over, sentries are posted, the tourists are satisfied and the monarch's security is, at least in theory, maintained.

Yet things are quiet in the Palace and the duties of the Guards—relieved only by a customary few minutes off in the Guards' Club—would have been monotonous and comparable to incarceration had not George IV left money for the officers to have a "good" dinner. Or so mused Osbert Sitwell in 1948. Here Sitwell ate and drank with critic Edmund Gosse and painter Walter Sickert. Hilariously, the last named has recently been suggested by best-selling crime-writer, Patricia Cornwell, as the identity of Jack the Ripper. So much for security.

And yet no other nation performs slick rituals as often or so well. Changing the Guard might today be more for the benefit of tourism than the sovereign's security, but it is still an eloquent and even touching reminder of a nation sometimes more comfortable with its past than its future.

London has had its great exhibitions, too, and the finest was The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, the defining event of Victorian culture, which took place in Hyde Park in 1851. The Albert Memorial now marks the site of engineer Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace. Thackeray, overwhelmed, declared "it was a noble awful great love-inspiring goose-flesh-bringing sight".

The Festival of Britain of 1951 was intended as a tonic to a nation debilitated by war; the Millennium Dome of 2000 demonstrated, again, a national generosity and, again, a national want of taste. It conformed exactly to Susan Sontag's definition of "camp" as being bad to the point of being ridiculous, but not to the point of being enjoyable. To many, the failure of the Millennium Dome suggested a decline in the English talent for organising unlikely things unusually well. To others it showed a persistent desire for ceremonial.

London needs such festive jubilation. Few other cities can be so gloomy. Shelley said: "Hell is a city much like London". To Disraeli, novelist and Prime Minister, "London

CHANGING THE GUARD...IS STILL AN ELOQUENT AND EVEN TOUCHING REMINDER OF A NATION SOMETIMES MORE COMFORTABLE WITH ITS PAST THAN ITS FUTURE.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: REX

Another contender in the "new tradition" stakes? The classic scrum on the buses when London's Tube network shuts down.



LEFT AND ABOVE RIGHT: REX. BELOW RIGHT: © MAWI. STOCKISTS: WILLMA 020 8960 7299

is a modern Babylon". It was the city's oppressive weather that made Thomas De Quincey turn to opium. He wrote from his Tavistock Street House. "It was a Sunday afternoon. Wet and cheerless: and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London." This is why Londoners want colourful ceremonies.

C P Snow—thinking of Druids, Welsh national costume and morris dancing—said most traditions were inventions of the 19th century. Here was an interesting half truth. But what new traditions might evolve into ceremonies? We could institutionalise the Brit Awards and make turning on the Christmas Lights in Oxford Street a worldwide media event. The Winter Closure of the M25 with the first snowfall has the potential to become a seasonal rival to Saturnalia. Tim Henman reaching the fourth round of Wimbledon before being knocked out could form the basis of a national ritual of self-abasement; the Easter Queues at Heathrow need only lighting, hair and make-up to rival Bartholomew Fair; and February 17, now and ever after, should be known as Congestion Day. The only problem here is that descendants of Henry VIII's "rude and common people" would have to pay £5 to drive to take part in the ceremonial.

NEW TRADITIONS

(any excuse for a celebration!)

Britons have a knack for turning any dismal or dramatic event into a cause for revelry. Take Guy Fawkes' Night, for example—who'd have thought blowing up the Houses of Parliament would inspire such family fun? Here we look at other features of British life that could one day take root in our traditional calendar.



FIRST IN LINE: stand still in the street too long and people will start lining up behind you. Whether it's for Wimbledon, above, or the first day of the Harrods sale, the art of queuing is a national pastime. A National Day of Queuing, when people take a packed lunch to go and stand outside a building waiting for it to open, can't be far off.

LEGS ELEVEN: once the reserve of the blue-rinse brigade, bingo has acquired an unlikely fan-base among celebrities and television presenters. It is now officially cool to play bingo, so to celebrate, how about a National Bingo Day? Newsagents could sell pin badges of two little ducks, and think of the fun we'd have naming the day—how about garden gate, man alive? That's May 8 to the uninitiated...

COME RAIN OR SHINE: ***Singin' in the Rain*** might as well be our new national anthem: Pavarotti sang to a sea of umbrellas in Hyde Park and, when downpours turned Glastonbury into a churning mud bath, everyone simply rolled up their trousers and carried on dancing. And who can forget the moment when Cliff Richard (a British tradition in himself) led the Wimbledon crowds in a jolly old singalong after rain stopped play? When the sun does come out, it's celebrated with an almost religious fervour seen nowhere else on the planet—who wouldn't welcome a special public holiday commemorating the first sight of the sun?

GOING NOWHERE: the daily grind of commuting has become something of a London tradition, a definitive rite of passage as worthy of celebration as, say, turning 21. Clinton's should commission a new range of cards to congratulate people on surviving their first rush-hour journey (assuming that their train turned up in the first place), praising them for the sharpness of their elbows and their skills in reading standing up with one cheek squashed against the window and the other in someone's armpit.

MISERY LOVES COMPANY: it is universally acknowledged that Brits love to moan: a recent guide to Britain for American visitors advises mentioning our transport woes if conversation dries up, and we've long known that the weather is the best topic for breaking the ice. Complaining is surely our greatest tradition, but we don't need a specially designated day for it —we've already got 365 in the year.

LAURA RICHARDSON



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SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW



London has always been a place of traditions. But now, the world's top high-street shops are taking their own customs and turning them on their heads—and visitors are lapping it up. James Ogilvy reports.

ONE OF THE reasons that Britain is such a popular destination is surely because of its traditions. There are the iconic buildings that people from across the planet come to see, such as Buckingham Palace and Big Ben, and also the fantastic museums. But what about the shops?

No self-respecting American or Japanese tourist would come to London without making a beeline for the likes of Burberry, Fortnum & Mason or Harrods. By doing so, they are, of course, in pursuit of something uniquely British; something they cannot get at home. First-time visitors to London sometimes have a wonderfully quaint idea of what they expect to find: a temporally jumbled mix of cobbled streets, Dickensian shops, double-decker buses, red pillar boxes and bobbies on the beat whistling jolly tunes. It is a selective vision informed by a whole range of sources from *Shakespeare in Love* to *Carry On* films.

The reality, of course, is that London has moved on just as much as the rest of the world. Having said that, shopping is an activity at which Londoners have always excelled and the capital offers fantastic variety and opportunities: you will find shops both as unique as those in the backstreets of Paris and as slick as those in Manhattan. In between the two extremes lies a whole range of "traditions".

Some businesses, such as the hatter James Lock in St James', have remained almost unchanged since Dickens' day, while others, such as Burberry, have taken the "traditional" reasons for their success and turned them into something quite modern. While Britain does still offer some splendid old traditions, it is also extremely good at reinventing them. It is this duality that makes it such a fascinating place, this ability to create what we should perhaps call "new traditions".

Burberry is one of the most amazing success stories of recent years. Since 1997, under the leadership of New Yorker Rose Marie Bravo, the brand has successfully transformed itself from a rather tired purveyor of raincoats into one of the 10 largest and most sought-after luxury brands in the world, with sales of around £2 billion a year. Although you will not be greeted by a man in a tailcoat, or come across overly deferential shop staff when you visit the New Bond Street flagship, this simply confirms its desirability as a destination. It is modern British retailing at its best. And here's an example of "new tradition"—far from throwing out the venerable old raincoats, Burberry has made a huge feature of them. Apart from continual visual references in its collections, it has just launched a bespoke service whereby you can choose the material, lining and details of your raincoat. As a result of all this, the tradition of Burberry now may be a little different, but it is stronger than it has ever been.

Liberty has also been busy. Don't be misled by the half-timbered, mock-Tudor façade—the store recently unveiled a very swish refurbished interior with large white spaces and futuristic displays. And the latest announcement is that it has taken on Lucille Lewin as creative director. Lewin is the founder of Whistles, one of the UK's most respected fashion chains, and her appointment has made fashion editors sit up and take notice. As an indication of her influence, London Fashion Week in February saw top designer Matthew Williamson dressing the store and windows. Be warned, Liberty is one to watch.

Over at Garrard—the sister company of jeweller Asprey—the turnaround has been similarly dramatic. Both are currently being revitalised by new owners, and crown jeweller Garrard has emerged from its





chrysalis first. Like Burberry, it used to occupy a landmark store on Regent Street but has now moved into the Bond Street area where it can enjoy the proximity of numerous luxury brands. In fact, Garrard has returned to its original location by Asprey's back door on Albemarle Street, where it opened for business a mere 268 years ago. You will find the very best of modern interior and jewellery design by creative director Jade Jagger, but it is the link with the past that provides a key part of the nterest in Garrard, that interplay between old and new.

At the top of Bond Street lies Oxford Street, a shopping Mecca that is dominated by Selfridges. Its founder at the turn of the last century was Gordon Selfridge. He would be proud to see his retailing tradition alive and well: it has just completed a major refurbishment, leaving it as the most forward-looking department store .n Europe.

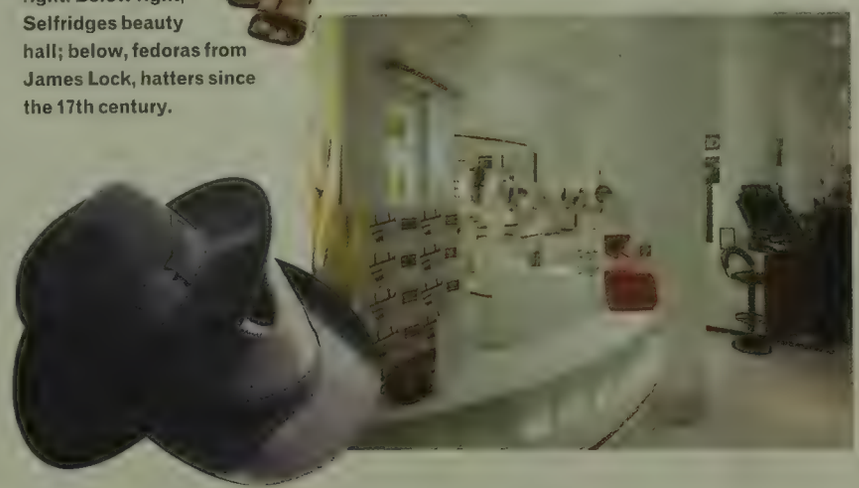
But these are the big guns. What of the smaller, more specialist shops? The last decade has been a fascinating time: a long period of prosperity and economic growth has provided the right environment for retailers of all kinds to flourish. First, some well-known names have spread their wings. Dunhill has escaped its reputation as a brand catering only for the Far East with much clearer retailing statements in both its Old Bond Street and Jermyn Street stores. Its new approach has strong links back to its heyday of the 1920s and 30s. Gieves & Hawkes has consolidated its position in the men's market, with new stores around the UK and a much more modern image, helped by good advertising. The focus of its efforts has been at its enviable address at Number One Savile Row, which carries a strong message. There has also been a change in the atmosphere of Savile Row itself. Few of the dusty tailors remain. The focus is now much more on the likes of Richard James, in his glass box on the corner of Clifford Street, Hackett's fine tailoring shop, or reinvigorated, older companies, such as Huntsman or Kilgour French Stanbury. All are about reinterpreting tradition for the here and now.

Then there are the newcomers. A surprising number of small British brands have been launched in recent years and are already part of the furniture. There is something unique about what they do and uniquely British in the way that they do it. Perfumer Jo Malone launched in the mid-1990s in a tiny shop in Walton Street, then progressed to a larger one. She is now multiplying fast. Connolly, supplier of the most wonderful leather goods, was recently bought by Joseph Ettedgui (founder of Joseph) and remains a single-outlet, destination store. Thomas Pink was just a single shop on the Fulham Road until it took off in the 1990s. It is now a key fixture on Jermyn Street, the shirt capital of the world, and with its black façade and chunky gold lettering, looks as though it has always been there. Like Jo Malone, it ended up being bought by one of the large luxury groups, in this case LVMH. Anya Hindmarch and Lulu Guinness both make the most extraordinary handbags—Guinness even has one as part of the V&A's permanent collection. In addition to their small London boutiques, their unique bags sell in the best stores overseas, such as Bergdorf Goodman in New York.

Finally, David Linley Furniture has expanded significantly on its Pimlico site and is very much in the business of new traditions—it sells handcrafted wooden furniture of the highest quality. Its designs are based on classical fundamentals, but interpreted for a modern lifestyle.

But is there anything for the visitor who really does want something more firmly rooted in the past? James Lock in St James' has been providing hats to

Previous pages, left, Selfridges, founded at the turn of the last century; right, Dunhill returns to its roots in men's tailoring. Above, the flagship Burberry store in New Bond Street where the brand has been reinvented, right. Below right, Selfridges beauty hall; below, fedoras from James Lock, hatters since the 17th century.









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the gentry since time immemorial. This extraordinary business has probably had a couple of coats of paint on the front door since the 17th century, but little else. Nearby on Jermyn Street you will find John Lobb, the long-established supplier of handmade shoes.

St James' seems to have some of the best examples of "old" traditions because up the road in Jermyn Street you will find Paxton & Whitfield, one of the world's best cheesemongers, right outside the back door of the grande dame of old-style retailing, Fortnum & Mason. Here there really are staff in tailcoats offering old-fashioned service in the hushed, but stunning, food hall, carpeted in deep red.

And here's one to finish with, back on St James' Street: the wine merchant Berry Bros & Rudd. But do not be deceived by this last one. It has a wonderfully patinated exterior of dark green that has been painted over again and again. Inside you will find Victorian standing desks, such as Bob Cratchit might have used, and a bare wooden floor that slopes away at an alarming angle. Until only a few years ago, the sales ledger was even filled in by copperplate pen. But this is all for show: Berry Bros is not only one of London's largest fine wine merchants, it also runs a highly successful web-based side to its business. Who says a little bit of theatre doesn't help?

Luxury Briefing is a monthly intelligence report on all that is happening internationally in the luxury industry. James Ogilvy is its founder and publisher. For more information please see either www.luxury-briefing.com or call +44 (0)1333 360606.

Above, Thomas Pink on Jermyn Street, the shirt capital of the world. Below, say it with stripes from Hackett on Savile Row. Below right, Dunhill on Old Bond Street, making a clear retailing statement.







ROYAL WARRANTS

Many of the older businesses, such as Fortnum & Mason, have what are called Royal Warrants. This really is an old tradition, that has been going since 1155 when the Weavers Company was so rewarded by King Henry II. Through the years, various historical figures such as Dick Whittington and William Caxton have been involved through their business activities.

It was Queen Victoria who enlarged the issue of warrants to reward tradesmen used regularly by the monarch and her family. The warrants are essentially the right to use the coat of arms of a royal household on the shop front, packaging, advertising and stationery.

Underneath the coat of arms will be words such as "By Appointment to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Grocers". Current "grantors" are the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and, until recently, the Queen Mother. A few businesses, such as vehicle manufacturer Land Rover, hold all four warrants. A household has to have used the business in question for at least five years and that patronage is reviewed regularly; between 20 and 40 are cancelled each year.

Some of those businesses that have warrants—currently around 800 firms—belong to the Royal Warrant Holders Association and are governed by a strict code of conduct. Intriguingly, the warrant is awarded to an individual—who is known as the grantee—rather than the business. For more information, see the website www.royalwarrant.org.



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MALDIVE TRAVEL

THE SEASON GOES INTERNATIONAL

The British Season, when the hats and hampers come out, is upon us once again. Celestria Noel discovers why this English institution is becoming more popular with the international top brass than its native audience.





THE SEASON, that confection of social and sporting summer events, is quintessentially and traditionally English. But over recent years it has become a magnet to a glamorous, young group of foreigners who winter in Gstaad or Aspen, summer in the Hamptons or St Tropez, and from May to July migrate to London.

The presence of top international names—such as the Miller sisters (Marie-Chantal, married to Prince Pavlos of Greece, and Pia, married to Christopher Getty); American-born Normandie Keith, married to Lucas White; and Cosima Pavoncelli, daughter of Claus von Bülow and wife of Riccardo Pavoncelli—has brought a new buzz to the London Season.

London society has become totally international—Greeks, Italians, South Americans and Russians are coming on to the scene, joining other top overseas stalwarts such as David Tang (originally from the Far East). Many are attracted by the Season, and its royal patronage and accompanying pageantry, which those of us who are British-born tend to take for granted.

They relish the fact that the Queen and members of the royal family always go to the Chelsea Flower Show and the Derby. They are also attracted by the fact that Royal Ascot, the polo at Smith's Lawn in Windsor Great Park and the Royal Windsor Horse show are held in the royals' own back yard—quite literally in the case of the horse show, which takes place in the privacy of Home Park. The Duke of Edinburgh competes in the carriage-driving trials at Windsor, while both he and Princess Anne have entered the sailing races at Cowes. The Prince of Wales still plays polo occasionally and Princes William and Harry are keen, so the tradition continues.

There's something uniquely exciting about the British Season. Many say the Queen and Prince Philip, left, at Ascot, draw in the young, cosmopolitan international set we're now used to seeing at our summer events.

Princess Dora Loewenstein, daughter of the Rolling Stones' financial guru Prince Rupert, and married to Italian Count Manfredi della Gherardesca, is an event organiser. She says: "I think it's a marvellous accolade to the UK that the international set attend and support both seasonal events and fund-raisers. I put it down to the attraction of tradition and the monarchy."

Her sentiments are endorsed by Pilar Boxford, Swiss-French director of communications at Cartier in







Above, left to right, American-born Normandie Keith and husband Lucas White bring a buzz to the London scene; Prince William follows in his father's footsteps on the polo field; and Princess Tamara Czartoryski-Borbon with friend Anouska de Georgiou.

London, who created Cartier International Day at Guards Polo Club 18 years ago and has seen it become a highlight of the social scene. "The special essence must be preserved," she says, "as it is so attractive to foreigners. The combination of the Queen, military bands and the Coronation Cup appeals to our guests, because you do not see it anywhere else. The Argentine Open, for example, held in Buenos Aires in November, attracts only locals and polo fans.

"Our polo draws the trendy, fashion-conscious, younger, international crowd, the same ones who go to the shows in Paris and Milan—for instance our guests have included Chloë Sevigny and Lauren Bush." She goes on to add that the uniqueness of the British Season makes it a fantastic commercial opportunity, one which Cartier has homed in on.

Arnaud Bamberger, managing director of Cartier UK, who can be seen at many of the Season's events, says: "It is something which simply does not exist anywhere else. We believe in it so strongly that we have created events which have become part of it." He is referring not only to Cartier International Day at Guards but to the fact that Cartier has also sponsored prize-winning gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show, as well as creating the Cartier Racing Awards, an annual event for the year's best horses, celebrated with a dinner in the autumn.

Many would agree that sporting events in other countries lack the pull of their British equivalents. Lori Tedesco, a stylish New York lawyer who has lived in London for seven years, says that she had never attended a race meeting at home, except with friends in Kentucky. "Here I was taken straight to the Epsom Derby and amazed by the formality. I had never seen men in top hats and tails before. I also loved having my skirt length measured at Henley."

Australian John Rendall, for many years social editor of *Hello!*, says British events are simply more fun than their overseas equivalents, with the exception of the loud and colourful Melbourne Cup. "Who can blame beautiful, rich American girls for throwing themselves so enthusiastically into the British Season? Anyone who has attended a Daughters of the American Revolution 'benefit' can instantly understand."

Certainly my own experience of fund-raisers in New York, Florida and California, while I was working as social editor of *Harpers & Queen* during the 1990s, was that they were staid and sober, and inclined to end just as you would be getting into your stride in London. Our Season is more convivial, to say the least.

Aristocratic French fashion writer Laure de Gramont, who has been to Wimbledon and Henley, has her own theory as to why people enjoy themselves there. "What impressed me most was the quantity of champagne and Pimm's that the Brits are capable of drinking at midday in the sun—or the rain—under the fallacious pretext of following a sports event." She adds that the French love to pore over pictures of the royals at Ascot, which are carried in all the major French photo magazines.

"WHO CAN BLAME AMERICAN GIRLS FOR THROWING THEMSELVES INTO THE BRITISH SEASON? ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN TO A DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 'BENEFIT' CAN UNDERSTAND."

However, it is not just the heartier, Pimm's-fuelled events or traditional outdoor fixtures that attract the overseas visitors and the chic expats living in London. The Season also encompasses newer arts-based events such as the summer party at the Serpentine Gallery in

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Above, left to right, Riccardo Pavoncelli with wife Cosima are among the international party-goers who flock to London in May; Prince Philip competes in the Windsor Horse Trials; and David Bowie and Iman frequently add glamour to arts events such as the Serpentine Gallery's summer party.

Hyde Park, which recently saw Michael Bloomberg, now mayor of New York, testing the waters of the Season. Institutions such as the Royal Academy and the Wallace Collection throw glitzy parties to mark special openings and exhibitions. Such events are familiar to New Yorkers such as Tedesco. "In New York, social life is very much black-tie fund-raisers for MoMA [the Museum of Modern Art] or the Met." She and her friends were brought up as city girls, constantly exposed to culture, and it is this aspect of the Season which attracts many of them. They are to be found in droves at the opera at Garsington or the newer Grange Park in Hampshire.

The same international set is also very active and generous in the field of charity events. Olga Ramos-Esteban—Franco-Colombian media director of Chanel, and this year's co-chair of the gala preview of the Grosvenor House Art and Antiques Fair, in aid of children's charity KIDS—is full of praise for the generosity of people in London. "Here you can make a difference and mobilise people who are very willing and ready to help. It is wonderful to be able to walk into a city and find such support." Apart from KIDS, Ramos-Esteban has helped set up the Smith-Magenis Syndrome Foundation, to support children with a rare chromosomal deficiency. "As soon as I mention it, doors open. It's amazing how generous busy people are with time and money."

There is no doubt that a younger international group has brought new blood, new energy and new money to the world of charity galas, where they often predominate. Melissa Knatchbull, a contributing editor to *Harpers & Queen* says: "I recently attended a charity event at Windsor Castle that was hosted by the Prince of Wales. As I wafted around the rooms I was challenged to find an English companion. The guests were mainly bejewelled foreign women with handsome husbands." She admits that they are better dressed—even the younger ones. They do not seem to think being smart means being uncool. Princess Tamara Czartoryski-Borbon, daughter of Prince Adan Czartoryski-Borbon, a Polish aristocrat and first cousin of King Juan Carlos of Spain, has impeccably hip credentials as a champion kick-boxer, TV presenter and actress. She is also a keen show jumper who has worked as a stunt rider. Her views are not untypical. "When I was younger, growing up abroad, my parents always wore glamorous outfits to every event. So when the opportunity arises I jump at the chance to follow in my mother's footsteps."

Dress designer Tomasz Starzewski says that most of his best customers are foreigners living in London, who expect to dress beautifully for social events. Melissa Knatchbull thinks that the cosmopolitan contingent have injected glamour, grandeur and international flavour into an otherwise rather staid environment. "The largest hats at Ascot, the highest Manolo stilettos at the polo and the sleekest, most expensive couture gowns at charity balls are worn rarely, if ever, by English girls."

If I were to be awkward I would say in response to this that no sensible English woman would actually want to wear too big a hat at Ascot, let alone heels for the polo. And few spend money on couture when they could be spending it on curtains. But, on the whole, she is right to praise her international pals for making the effort and for appreciating all that the Season has to offer.

"THE LARGEST HATS AT ASCOT, THE HIGHEST MANOLO STILETTOS AT THE POLO AND THE SLEEKEST, MOST EXPENSIVE COUTURE GOWNS AT BALLS ARE WORN RARELY BY ENGLISH GIRLS."

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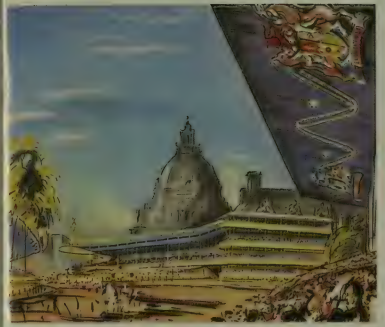
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CROWNING GLORY

A look back at the pageant celebrating the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

"FAMOUS HAVE been the reigns of our Queens. Some of the greatest periods in our history have been due to their sceptre." So pronounced Winston Churchill in February 1952. Having just welcomed 25-year-old Elizabeth back to London as Queen of England, following the death of her beloved father while she sojourned in Kenya, the praise and flattery lavished upon the young Queen came from all corners of the Commonwealth, from politicians and public alike. Prime Minister Churchill, Earl Mountbatten and Lord Beaverbrook all remarked on her natural beauty. Photographer Cecil Beaton admired "the unspoilt childishness of the smile, the pristine quality of her pink and white complexion". Churchill agreed: "All the film people in the world, if they had scoured the globe, could not have found anyone so suited to the part." So













The pomp and splendour of a royal event: above, from left to right, the front cover of a commemorative double issue of *The Illustrated London News*, May 30, 1953; an impression of the stands outside Westminster Abbey, where leading representatives of the Commonwealth and Empire were seated for the ceremony, under decorations depicting the eight self-governing countries of the Commonwealth and the arms of the county towns of England, Scotland and Wales; the ceremonial decorations on The Mall consisted of tubular-steel arches from which a princess' coronet was suspended by wires threaded with aluminum spheres, designed to look like "drops of dew on threads of gossamer". Far left, the Queen arrives at Westminster Abbey for her coronation, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh and her maids of honour, to be greeted by the Duke of Norfolk. Main picture, the key moment of the ceremony, as the Archbishop places St Edward's Crown on the Queen's head, watched by the peers and peeresses of the realm and members of the royal family.

Britain had been in a gloomy mood, but it was almost a year and a half later before she had her red-carpet moment, at the spectacular coronation ceremony that entranced the nation.

Coronation fever swept through the country, shop windows displayed commemorative memorabilia and millions applied for television licences to take advantage of the first screening of a royal event. The popular press could concentrate on nothing else, with *The Illustrated London News* alone devoting thousands of pages to coverage of the ceremonies.

When the big day finally arrived—June 2, 1953—half a million people had slept out overnight along the route of the procession. By chance, news came through that a Commonwealth expedition had finally conquered Everest, and that a British flag now flew atop the world's highest mountain. It was a fitting symbol of the mood of the nation, anticipating the great achievements that would no doubt come under a new Elizabethan era.

The ceremony itself, steeped in centuries old tradition and ritual, was a suitably solemn affair, but celebration erupted after the Archbishop pressed the crown and placed it on Elizabeth's head, with shouts of "God Save the Queen!" ringing out, trumpets sounding and the great guns booming from the Tower of London. Crowds of well-wishers lining the route back to Buckingham Palace, were rewarded with smiles and waves from the royal party. For weeks afterwards, the nation was wreathed in tinsel and a warm sense of unity. In the real world, there were dark spectres—Communism, imperial decline and the atom bomb but, for now, the glory of majesty lived on.









Main picture, the newly crowned Queen leads the procession down the nave of Westminster Abbey; above, Her Majesty leaves the Abbey holding the Orb and Sceptre; below, the extravagant Coronation display staged by Selfridges, depicting the reigns of the two Queen Elizabeths; far below, the front cover of *The Sphere*, June 6, 1953.

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IN THE CLUB

"If you need me, I'll be at my club," are words most Brits would love to be able to utter at least once in their lifetime. Sociable Simon Mills considers the long-time allure of members' only clubs and finds out what today's hippest venues are doing to keep the crowds queuing.



AN OLD ETONIAN friend of mine is a member of the St James' gentlemen's club Boodles. His dad is also a member. And so is his grandad.

It is a wilfully unfashionable establishment that first opened as the la-di-da Savoir Faire club in 1762. There is no brass plaque next to the front door to mark Boodles' well-heeled location and, unlike the Groucho Club or Soho House up the road, the antics of its members do not appear in the gossip columns. Ceilings are high, walls are putty coloured and the leather club chairs are chubby, deep-seated, and soporifically congenial to protracted sessions of sound, afternoon sleep. Should you desire a Vodka Gimlet or a Sidecar, you simply ring a buzzer on the wall and a nice eastern European girl dressed in an old-fashioned maid's outfit will arrive to serve your needs in an efficient but unobsequious manner.

Upstairs, a high standard of comforting stodge is served with the quaint addition of the now largely outdated "savoury" course (usually Welsh Rarebit) following pudding. Ladies are not permitted in the main part of the club, but there is a separate dining room where members are allowed to dine with female guests.

If you want to become a member of this bastion of fine fellows and Gin Fizz you have to be proposed by a member, seconded by another and approved by five other existing members.

So, I wanted to know, what do you actually do when you spend an evening at somewhere like Boodles? Well, one thing you must not do is (whisper it) discuss work. This is considered extremely bad form. My Etonian friend told me that he once received a stiff memo from the club informing members that several of them had been overheard concluding some business deal or another and that this sort of ungentlemanly behaviour had to stop immediately.

Now, this was the detail that really slayed your reporter. You see, being a social type of man who likes to get around a bit, I have been invited to become a member of literally dozens of new members' clubs that have sprung up in Soho, Notting Hill or Chelsea during the past 10 or so years. For a while, barely a morning would go by without some weighty, gravure-printed prospectus for a new or recently revamped club landing on my doormat. They would arrive complete with a menu (more often than not "fusion"), a list of facilities and illustrious board members attached.

The clubs would come in all shapes, designs, sizes and locations and they would ask potential members to consider coughing up anywhere between £100 and £500 a year for the privilege of joining their exclusive ranks. Indeed, the only thing that seemed to unite them was their desire to attract an industrious, creative, vigorously professional clientele.

Adams Street, which opened last year on Adams Street, just off the Strand, caters for members with freelance careers. Situated in an old actors' haunt, it has a library and a study where one can "plug-in" one's laptop computer. There are, as yet, no plans to introduce such facilities at Boodles.

Woody's, over in self-consciously bohemian W10, is aimed at the area's indigenous "trustafarian" populous. The Groucho is for thesps, movie biz and hacks. Tim Geary, a representative from Soho House, recently described the concept of the club thus. "The point of Soho House is to create an environment where people, mainly from media, television and film, can do business and relax with like-minded people."

So, to discover a club like Boodles, which actively discourages its members from braying on about profit margins and "opening weekends" was a minor revelation.

And now that the members' club boom has started to slow down a bit, the advertising business is in a state of flux and the dot.com bubble has burst, there are signs that Boodles might







not be so out of step as one would first think. Clubs are becoming less suit- and work-orientated, and more geared to relaxation and recreation.

The Lonsdale is one of the latest of the new breed. Situated in a former pub on Lonsdale Road, W11 (aka "God's own postcode") it is a hip but grown-up bar/restaurant decorated in slick, contemporary Manhattan style, at a cost of £2 million by the Fusion Architects group, with lots of polished woods, dark reds and deep banquettes. Pearly button works by hip artist Anne Carrington adorn the walls.

Upstairs there's Genevieve, the private section. Membership here is free but strictly by invitation only and at the discrimination of a fiercely groovy committee made up of local movers and shakers. "We're an intimate kind of place," says committee member Jasmin Pelham. "Genevieve is run on a table reservation system and is totally service orientated. Our mission is to provide a discreet meeting place for local residents and key people in the surrounding area. We believe that the day of the huge members' club is over and we understand that people don't want to spend loads of money just so they feel constrained to hang out at the same place night after night. We want to have that private club atmosphere without people having to pay through the nose for it."

There's a slightly different dynamic at play over at the witheringly expensive Sketch, on Conduit Street, a multi-tiered, hedonists' theme park of a club with a private members' bar attached. Owned by Mourad "Momo" Mazouz, who also owns Momo—the cramped but funky, Moroccan-themed members' bar on Heddon Street—Sketch is a former Christian Dior showroom, refurbished at a cost of over £12million by French hot-shot designer Noe Douchafour Lawrence.

Sketch is undeniably impressive. Mesmerising kinetic sculptures are buried in walls behind glass, and the staircase appears to be running with molten caramel. You step downstairs into the West Bar (half Korova Milk Bar, half Austin Powers-style shag pad), before walking into the spectacular video gallery, which becomes the Gallery restaurant at night. The loos, up on a mezzanine floor, are a series of huge, white, egg-shaped pods. Peek inside one and you can't help thinking of that hilarious bit in *Spinal Tap* where guitarist Derek Smalls gets stuck inside a pod-shaped stage-prop during a gig.

Underneath this jet-age latrine is the East Bar—a white, non-smoking *boîte* complete with inflatable furniture that is straight out of Woody Allen's *Sleeper*.

"I will not make one pound out of this place for at least 10 years. It is not easy. I am brave, ambitious and maybe a bit stupid," says Momo, insisting that he is not in it for the money. "I do this really, truthfully, for the love—for the love of being a host, to provide hospitality."

His love seems to be spreading too. Mick Jagger, Jade Jagger, Christina Aguilera, Justin Timberlake, Donatella Versace, Kate Moss, Nancy Dell'Olio, Jay Kay, footballers Robert Pires and Sol Campbell have already visited since Sketch opened last December. Mario Testino took one look around and exclaimed, "Darling, I just have to shoot here!"

"What we're offering is an unforgettable experience," says Momo. So, how do you become a member? Momo is a tad ambiguous on this point. "It is really a place for friends. It's not about the money. We will instantly know who is right and who is wrong."

The private members' club thing as we now know it started off in rather less highfalutin style at Zanzibar on Great Queen's Street, Covent Garden, in the late 1970s. Matthew du Cann, now proprietor of his own club, 57 Jermyn Street (SW1), was a runner during the club's early 1980s prime. Legendary barman Dick Bradsell—formerly of the Groucho and the eponymous Dick's Bar at The Atlantic Bar and Grill—and Mary Lou Sturridge (now at The Groucho) were also Zanzibar alumni. "It was a very influential place," says Du Cann. "It set a standard for all the subsequent clubs, such as The Groucho, to follow."

Du Cann was not particularly convinced by the private members' club explosion that followed in the 1990s, though. "For many entrepreneurs, private membership was seen as a way of bypassing the then strict licensing laws, and there were quite a few chancers around trying to make a fast buck. The thinking was that, with a list of members on your books, you could tell the judge that you could keep track and be held responsible for your drinkers. Many judges were a bit naive and fell for it."

A good club will have that crucial *Cheers* element, reckons Du Cann, in short, it should be a place, like the famous Boston sit-com bar, "where everybody knows your name". "57 Jermyn Street (which opened back in February 1999) is a bit like a big family. Our regulars visit two or three times a week. The staff know what they like to drink. Friendships are forged. Barriers are broken down," he says. Membership is £250 a year.

Previous pages, the ultra-stylish Sketch, which attracts many stars, such as, clockwise from top, Hugh Grant, Kate Moss and Simon Le Bon. Keith Allen, above left, was a fan of The Groucho. Top left, the slick, hip Lonsdale.

FOR MANY ENTREPRENEURS, PRIVATE MEMBERSHIP WAS A WAY OF BYPASSING THE THEN STRICT LICENSING LAWS.

A stagger away from 57 Jermyn Street is The Embassy, owned by veteran club proprietor Mark Fuller (formerly of Sugar Reef and Red Cube). The Embassy has a snug but modern VIP bar (for members only) and a fine dining restaurant with a Michelin-starred chef at the helm. A dance floor kicks in after midnight. The club counts Chelsea footballers Mario Melchiot and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink as members. David and Victoria Beckham, Lady Victoria Hervey, Ross Kemp and Lysette Anthony are also on the books. "The days when you could charge £500 a year and watch a select group of members from one particular professional field flood in are over," says Fuller. "A lot of the corporate expense account is just not there any more."

Perhaps Fuller would do well to follow Soho House's Nick Jones' lead and try his luck in the US. Jones, who also owns Electric House, Notting Hill (a private club/diner/cinema) and Babington House, Somerset, recently opened Soho House, New York, to much fanfare (despite the fact it is located in the meatpacking district of Manhattan and not actually in New York's SoHo). The club's 500 founding members include Liam Neeson, Gwyneth Paltrow, Natasha Richardson, Helen Hunt, David Bowie, Uma Thurman, Ethan Hawke and Julianne Moore. However, any visitor expecting the NY club to offer the same kind of cramped, elegant slumming that the London branch excels in will be sorely disappointed. Soho House New York is nothing if not ambitious.

The $15 million project is spread out over 45,000sq ft on four floors of a former 1903 grain storage warehouse with a cinema, roof deck (kitted out with hammocks for those balmy summer nights), spa, bar, lounge and restaurant. A swimming pool is planned for next year. The décor is English country house meets NYC loft, with lots of deep-pile, Persian rugs, twinkly chandeliers, and deep-seated club chairs which set off the light industrial building's exposed beams and sandblasted brickwork. "The idea is that members can come in during the day, work, have meetings, take a shower, sit by the fire with a laptop computer," says the British male-model-turned-novelist Tim Geary, who is on the club's membership committee. If you want a piece of this plush, fun-fair of the vanities you'll have to be okayed by a 27-person committee, which includes Alan Cumming and Griffin Dunne, and pay $900 a year plus a one-time $200 registration fee for the privilege.

Jones has not been fazed by the scale of his American adventure, nor is he overly concerned by the long-held belief that New Yorkers don't really "get" the private members' club thing. (Manhattanites say that private clubs don't work in New York because their city thrives on immediacy and a fickle, transient crowd who always want to keep moving, and the only subscription fee you pay to get into a club is the $20 bill you bung the clipboard Nazi to release you from the hell of the five-deep crowd outside.) "Look," says Jones bullishly. "We haven't gone to New York to simply survive."

Truth be told, Jones, Fuller, Du Cann and Momo are all chasing a similar dream. They would all, no doubt, agree that, in an ideal world, everyone should be allowed the opportunity to utter that wonderfully decadent sentence "I'm going out. If you need me, I'll be at my club," at least once. Bertie Wooster had Drones and the Junior Ganymede while Lucian Freud had the Colony. Even the Queen was spotted at Annabel's recently.

Groucho Marx, famously, never wanted to become a member of a club that would have him as a member, but he would probably have rather liked the club which was named in honour of his self-loathing quip.

During its Bacchanalian hey-day in the late 1980s and 90s, The Groucho was where Liam Gallagher once lobbed a snooker ball at a member (he missed but the dent in the plaster is still there, apparently); where Stephen Fry could be found entrenched in a livid game of Perudo upstairs; where an acid-tongued Julie Burchill would hold court, Dorothy Parker-style, in a corner; and the roguish triumvirate of Damien Hirst, Blur's Alex James and actor Keith Allen would be busy working out how much champagne they had consumed in their accumulated lifetimes.

The Groucho recently changed hands and its hedonistic glory days may have passed (the club is now owned by a syndicate that includes PR whizz-kid Matthew Freud) but it is still not unusual for, say, a well-lubricated Dustin Hoffman to be found singing songs around the piano with a few recently acquired drinking buddies as a chorus line.

These are the clandestine moments of exclusive magic that the fee-paying club member lives for.



THE HOUSE PARTY

Before the wars, country piles were a peculiarly British indulgence. Now, thanks to changes in house-building legislation, a building boom is seeing some amazing new residences being built—this time with fewer maids' pantries and more hi-tech gadgetry. But who are the new lords of the manor? Gareth Rubin finds out.

ONE OF THE most enduring symbols of the British way of life is the country house. Around the world, the word Britain conjours up images of country piles of yellow stone, staffed by liveried butlers and maids wearing black-and-white uniforms. But things are changing. There is a new wind blowing through our villages and across the moors and glens. The houses that we once thought we knew so well are taking on a new character.

Nowadays, the occupant of Tumbledown Manor is as likely to be a member of the Rolling Stones or a football player as a baronet. And these young upstart gentry have new ideas about what they want out of their home. Out are the white-gloved valets, billiard rooms and Rolls-Royces; and in are the personal shoppers, bowling alleys and helipads—helicopters are the way to get to the recording studio by 4pm, in time to lay down a couple of tracks before hitting the Groucho Club in the evening.

In fact, the number of country houses being built has rocketed in the last few years. The land is heaving with a boom in the construction of the kind of houses not built since World War I killed (or bankrupted) half the landed gentry who used to reside in them.

Jeremy Musson, architecture editor of *Country Life*, says that, although the number actually built in the last few years is "in the tens", there are dozens more waiting for planning permission. "They're being built right now because people have enough money to do it," he says. "Many of the owners are from new money, but also there are a number of old families who are replacing their ancestral homes which were lost when they became too expensive to maintain. In addition to that, there are many more skilled artisans and architects specialising in this sort of work out there, and the more work they get, the more people see it, so the whole thing increases again."

But classical architect Quinlan Terry (said to be Prince Charles' favourite) gives a more basic reason for the boom: "The reason that people spend time and money in contemplating building large country houses is the same as it has always been: that is, that they want to settle somewhere in beautiful countryside to enjoy their leisure and retirement," he says.

Many of the houses are the fruits of a change in the law six years ago. The legislation, known as PPG7, bent the planning rules for houses of "outstanding architectural distinction", meaning they could now be built on previously open countryside.

"The opportunity to build our neoclassical house was made available by PPG7," says distillery heir John Greenall of his newly built eight-bedroom house Wootton Hall, constructed from local Peak District sandstone. "This planning guideline is unique and fundamental to the creation of new houses. We feel that our creation has done all of these things but, more importantly, is in itself an achievement of which the commissioners, architects, builders and planners are all proud."

Wootton Hall, on the edge of the Peak District, cost Greenall (brother of Lord Daresbury) around £5million. He considers it money well spent. The house, which is built on land designated an area of outstanding natural beauty, includes eight en suite bedrooms, each of which has the kind of floor area residents of London believe constitute a house. The ceilings of the rooms stretch up no less than 12ft. The house is topped off with a majestic lead-domed roof. Wootton Hall spreads over 12,000sq ft—about 15 times the average house—on a 1,400-acre estate.

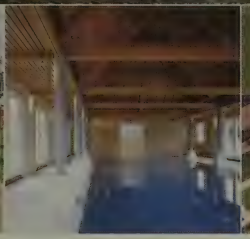
Among the more staggering houses going up are a number designed by architect Robert Adam (coincidentally, a namesake of the famous Scottish 18th-century designer of stately homes). "There have always been a few country houses being built," he says. "But, right now, there is much more interest and more are being constructed; we've got about 30 on our books at various stages." There are a number of reasons for the increase of interest: there is a lot of wealth in the economy; there aren't enough country houses to go around (hundreds

The Hampshire country house, above, to be built in King's Somborne by Robert Adam Architects, shows how old designs can be adapted for modern living.











Grafton New Hall, above, shocked many traditionalists with its radical starfish-like design. Right, buyers are queuing up to splash out £3.25 million on The Hall in Essex, complete with swimming pool, centre. Far right, the Beckhams' mock Georgian mansion, nicknamed Beckingham Palace.

have been lost in the last 50 years); people have discovered that new classical houses can be as well designed as the old ones; and new houses have become more socially acceptable. "Our clients come from all sorts of backgrounds: established money, software millionaires, rock stars, developers, city money. All our clients have thought about their projects very carefully and none will spend their money recklessly. Building a new country house is a long-term, expensive and testing endeavour."

Among those celebrity couples are David and Victoria Beckham, who bought a former children's home in Hertfordshire for £5 million and set about converting it into the house now known as Beckingham Palace (although the Post Office recognises it as Rowenbury House). Many of the celebrity country set are not even British—Madonna, well known for her Anglophilia, owns a large house on the Wiltshire/Dorset border.

While most houses are on the classical model, some developers are opting for something a little more outré. Ushida Findlay Architects won a Royal Institute of British Architects competition to reinterpret the English country house at Grafton New Hall, with an ultra-modern design based on the surrounding landscape. There is certainly luxury: every bedroom has a jacuzzi and there is a Zen garden, a cinema and an art gallery. And if the future residents are in a hurry to get somewhere, they can simply use the retractable helipad. But although the design begs to be stared at, the hall, which is on a 114-acre estate in Cheshire, will be so low-lying it will be difficult to see from a distance. "It's designed to look as if it's growing out of the ground," says the house's designer, Kathryn Findlay, of Ushida Findlay Architects. It will cost around £4 million to build, and a lot more to fit out, but the wider costs will be minimised. "It will be self-sustaining and as ecologically responsible as possible," she explains. "Traditionally, the great English country house was a radical building type. Our house might seem a little out of this world, but in a sense it is connecting the English country house back to its tradition of innovation as well as connoisseurship."

Building a mansion from scratch also means the technological innovation of the last few decades can be seamlessly integrated into the house, attracting many city types who are used to their home comforts. Wide-screen TVs and ludicrously expensive hi-fi equipment are built into every room, while hi-tech security measures complement the geographical isolation that celebrities and the ultra-rich desire.

Many people with money are also putting their cash into property, fed up with the recent roller-coaster ride of the stock market. For those who have made their money in the city, a country house is somewhere they can relax at the weekend, while the instant millions made out of dot.coms have also made being rich far more fashionable over the last few years, so those who have the money are now more inclined to flaunt it.

But some of the new owners gained their money the more traditional way—by inheriting it. Head up to Rannoch Moor in Scotland, and you will be greeted with the sight of the "Pink Palace". Swedish millionairess Lisbet Koerner, heiress to the TetraPak milk carton empire, has spent nearly £20million on the massive hunting lodge; but, not satisfied with the local building materials, her architect ordered granite to be imported from Portugal. The locals have complained about the use of the foreign stone and gave the six-storey building its colourful nickname because of what they say is alien colouring.

Some people, however, want their new houses to look like old houses. A new building called The Hall, developed by Countryside Properties in Wickham Bishops, Essex, has been designed specifically to be a mishmash of historical styles, so that it appears to have a Georgian core that was added to during the English Regency. The price tag is £3.25 million and potential buyers are showing a lot of interest.

Some are taking the influence of the past one step further, and wholly re-creating it. Syrian Wafic Said, who amassed a fortune from arms trading, is building a replica of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio's Villa Rotunda, set in 3,000 acres of Oxfordshire parkland. Said, a friend of Mark Thatcher, bought the estate from Lord Bicester, who sat in the House of Lords after spending 32 years in a series of psychiatric hospitals.

Quinlan Terry believes every age has its own distinct characteristics. "Most people who have an eye for these things never confuse my buildings with any of the 17th- or 18th-century Palladian buildings which inspired them," he says. "This is because the spirit of the age will always express itself. Palladio thought his buildings would remind his contemporaries of Ancient Rome, whereas they are the hallmark of the quattrocento. Only time will tell to what extent my buildings will be seen in the future as the hallmark of this period."

Beating Wafic Said for the prize of most vulgar display of money is Nicholas van Hoogstraten. The property developer is spending £40 million building Hamilton Palace in Sussex, which has a frontage wider than Buckingham Palace. But Hoogstraten is unlikely to see it for a while—he is spending 10 years residing at Her Majesty's pleasure after being convicted of the manslaughter of a former business associate. He has announced that Hamilton Palace will be his mausoleum after he dies, and wants all his art treasures and antiques to be bricked up inside with him, never to be enjoyed by anyone else. So at least he will get some use out of it...eventually.

Robert Adam believes the houses currently being built are an expression of a natural human desire to leave something behind: "It is an enduring human desire. It has given us many of the great houses of the past and made the English countryside what it is today. There is no reason why it shouldn't do so again. If you have money, what better way to spend it than to create your own way of living in the countryside and leave a fine house for posterity and your own immortality?"

MARTIN HARVEY/CORBIS; RICHARD BRYANT/ARCAID/CORBIS; SUSAN GRIGGS AGENCY/CORBIS; ANDREW HOLT/ALAMY; ROBERT HARDING PICTURE LIBRARY/ALAMY

BRITONS GOING BOLDLY

Fifty years after Edmund Hillary became the first recorded person, with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, to reach the summit of Everest, Britons are still achieving great feats of daring. Clare Brundle talks to some of today's leading explorers to find out why we are such a nation of adventurers.



Dwarfed by the surrounding peaks, the members of the team that conquered Everest in 1953 in the Western Cwm, with Lingtren and Khumbutse, on the frontier with Tibet, in the background. This journey is described in detail by George Band, one of the team, in *Everest, 50 Years on Top of the World*.

FUELLED BY colonial and commercial desires, Britain has historically stood at the forefront of long-distance forays by land and sea, since the 19th-century global land grab by Europe. Proximity to the neighbouring continent, a limited landmass, and threat of invasion are among the reasons that led us to develop as an outward-looking nation, keen to establish an overseas empire. Mike Searle, a leading Himalayan geologist from Oxford, believes that this past has created a national predilection for exploration. "It is in the British blood, in our history and in our nature," he comments. But mountaineer Stephen Venables argues that we have overrated our significance: "The British have played a glorious part, but we have never dominated. This is a delusion created by our own introspective world view," he says.

The field of exploration is clearly one filled with controversy. There is, for example, an ongoing debate about the definition of modern exploration. "The difficulty is that 'real exploration' is not some clearly defined activity like 'real tennis', but is generally thought to involve discovery, either geographic or scientific," explains Sir Ranulph Fiennes, holder of 10 expeditionary world records. He also supports mountaineer Chris Bonington in his view that new materials and improved communications have revolutionised exploration, enabling people to stretch the limits further and changing the way that adventure is pursued.

Technological safety nets and detailed satellite photography have, on the other hand, led some to question whether genuine exploration still exists. "Many so-called explorers are just going on glorified

sponsored walks—tremendous achievements but not necessarily exploration," claims Venables. Benedict Allen, the popular explorer and editor of *The Faber Book of Exploration* is also dubious. He argues that "walking to the South Pole is not exploration; it is only exploration if you are pushing a frontier". He believes landscapes should be interpreted without maps or GPS and that it is only by making yourself vulnerable that you can really learn about a place.

Whether adventure or exploration, the achievements of such Britons exemplify our continuing prominence in this arena. While undeniable that it is part of human nature to explore and, to a certain degree, the key to our success as a species, what drives these characters to such dangerous extremes? While writing *Quest for Adventure*, Chris Bonington spent months researching remarkable feats of exploration from 1950-2000. The common link he discovered was that every one of the ventures represented a plunge into the unknown.



Latterday explorer Benedict Allen in the jungles of Indonesia, above, and in Namibia, right, where he trekked 1,000 miles through the Namib Desert in the company of three disgruntled camels.

to satisfy mankind's insatiable curiosity about ourselves and our reactions to stress or danger. He also realised that a less attractive, but equally undeniable element, is the ego factor. "It is a rare adventurer who does not have any of this in his or her make up," he admits. Ego, overcoming the impossible and "the British obsession with firsts" appear as recurring themes. Interviewing Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Dr Michael Stroud for *Time* magazine in 1993, Jesse Birnbaum concluded that the duo's efforts to reach the Poles was largely driven by the simple desire "to be the first at everything". Fiennes himself admits: "To my mind, there are only two purist challenges—to be the first person to get to the source of a river or climb a mountain, or to be first at something, such as crossing the Antarctic without help from the outside." Similarly, Bonington accepts "a bit of ego and precious little science" in his achievements, describing how he is still attracted by what seems at first glance to be impossible. "To me, the ultimate in adventure is to convert this impossible into the feasible."

Others are less willing to accept the importance of ego, particularly in the greatest of explorers or those pursuing scientific research. In these cases, passion for a subject matter or scientific discovery seems the dominant force. Brian Jones believes that his record-breaking, non-stop circumnavigation of the globe in a hot-air balloon was driven by "a passion for aviation", commenting that: "I don't believe my ego is a big factor, or indeed big." Colonel Blashford-Snell, the leader of the first successful descent of the Blue Nile, also rates "curiosity and conservation above ego". In fact, it is hard to argue that such a scientific explorer could be driven by personal glorification. Most discoveries are usually the result of months of gruelling fieldwork and tedious lab work by unpublicised teams from the likes of Kew's Royal Botanical Gardens or the Scott Polar Institute.

Strong institutional support is clearly a prevalent factor in the British tradition of exploration, from the public school system's encouragement of leadership, to research expeditions funded by Britain's world-renowned academic and scientific establishments. The 173-year-old Royal Geographical Society, in particular, has played a fundamental role. The first successful ascent of Everest was the culmination of nine expeditions by the Mount Everest Committee, jointly formed by the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club, which still provides funding and advice to over 500 teams per year. Sean Winser at the busy RGS Expedition Advisory Centre is particularly excited by the combination of cheap travel, worldwide media, the "Gap Year" and continuing sponsorship. "Expeditions are no longer just an opportunity for an elite few but for anyone who wants to go out and see the world for themselves," she explains.

Exploration may have been traditionally viewed by many as the sole preserve of the wealthy, privately educated or military male. However, while many of today's explorers are indeed the products of such institutions, this is by no means true for all. Similarly, exploration is not the "men only" club of yesteryear. "I am not sure that the desire is exclusively male, but in the past practitioners have been almost exclusively male, for obvious sociological reasons," Venables explains. Andrew Davis, Britain's leading caver, says he can think of no reason why a desire to explore should be a male trait. "I have certainly been involved with a number of female cave explorers whose dedication and determination are no different from their male counterparts." Indeed, as Dean Hopkinson, a 3-D expert and [illegible] of women's authority



Brian Jones, below, took off in Breitling Orbiter, left, with fellow pilot Bertrand Piccard, in March 1999 to successfully circumnavigate the world non-stop.

achievements dating back to the West African studies of Mary Kingsley in the Victorian era.

But are these modern women driven by the same motives? Benedict Allen certainly seems unsure. "Historically, men seem to need to prove themselves while women are less concerned with pushing limits, being more intuitive and concerned with other levels," he asserts. Education and social understanding certainly appear to play a more prominent part, from Freya Stark's foray into an Arabian harem in the 1930s to the solo-navigation of the world by Ellen MacArthur in 2000. "The sea is never the same and it makes you open your eyes. I love learning about what goes on in the rest of world," explains the record-breaking sailor to *Geographical* magazine. Rebecca Stephens, the first British woman to climb Everest and complete the Seven Summits, also seems less interested in achieving firsts and more interested in self-discovery. While admitting to a burning desire to reach the summit, she also uses Everest as a metaphor for life: "It's all about getting the most out of yourself and other people and focusing on what you want to do."





Centre right, Rebecca Stephens, the first British woman to conquer Mount Everest, and Sir Ranulph Fiennes, holder of 10 expeditionary records. Far right, Andrew Eavis indulges in some extreme cave exploration in China's Sichuan Province.

So what now—have all the firsts been achieved and our glorious age of exploration reached its zenith? Allen thinks not. "We have only scratched the surface of all the different levels, particularly genetics and the mind." Venables feels that the exploration of the human mind is in many ways more exciting and important. "Science will continue but in ever-increasing detail," he says. Searle also recognises the change in direction. "While it might not be about finding the source of a river any more, there is still plenty of scope for real frontier scientific exploration, endless in fact," he says, adding, "the internet has shrunk the world, but the true explorer can still get very lost."

For epic exploration in the traditional sense, Venables considers that this only remains possible in two places on the planet—"under the ground and in the oceans". Only one person has been to the ocean floor, while 1,500 have made it to the top of Everest, and more people have been to the moon than have travelled 3,000 metres beneath the sea. However, a large proportion of oceanic research continues to be carried out by satellite and survey ships, led by Japan, Canada, Australia, France, Germany and the USA, rather than individuals. On land, Eavis supports the importance of subterranean investigation and alone is responsible for the exploration of over 500km of completely unknown caves. He explains that "to go where no man has been before (and) the joy of seeing only one set of footprints behind you is, I am sure, what has driven all the main British explorers", and will continue to drive hundreds more.

Given the changing nature of exploration, it is open to debate whether Britain will continue to play such a leading role. Brian Jones is unsure due to the decline of "educational establishments that have traditionally engendered this spirit in their protégés. Worse still," he says, "is the typical role model for the current generation, which is much more likely to be a footballer or a soap star than a great adventurer."

In contrast, Bonington has more faith in our national strength and believes that, while genuine explorers are a tiny breed, as far as climbing goes, some of the best in the world do come from Britain. He also recognises the fact that "while the world's great superlative challenges and firsts may have been achieved, there are still unclimbed mountains, unsailed seas and breezes to carry us on our own personal quest for adventure."




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HIGH CLIMBING

On the 50th anniversary of man's first ascent of Everest, get into the climbing spirit and scale some of London's tallest buildings, writes Laura Richardson.

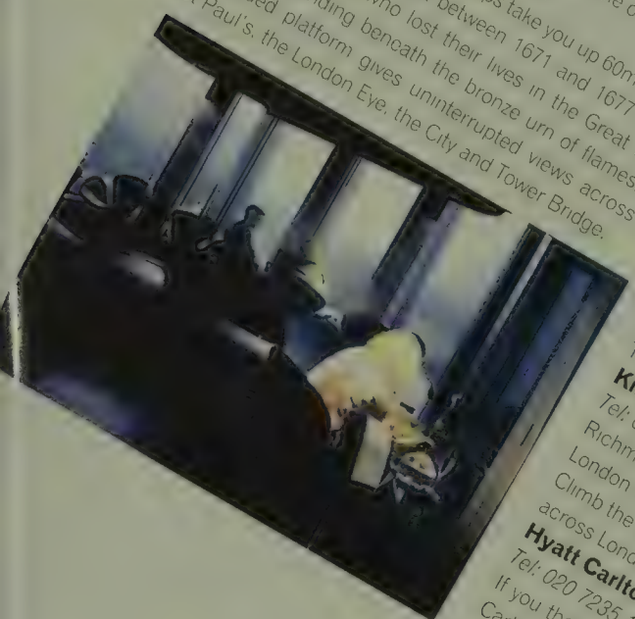
WHAT DOES it feel like to stand on the roof of the world? When Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay made the first successful ascent of Everest in 1953, their initial feelings were of relief and unadulterated delight. Other climbers have expressed their exhilaration at being able to walk on some of the highest points on earth and the thrill of seeing the land fall away far beneath them. If the climber in you is feeling suffocated in the city, fear not: what London lacks in mountains, it makes up for in skyscraping structures. It's well worth trying those that are open to the public to view London from a completely new angle. You'll be surprised by "the sheer beauty of what can be seen from so high", as mountaineer Chris Bonington puts it.

PETER COOK

BA London Eye, *County Hall, SE1. Tel: 0870 500 0600. Private capsule booking, tel: 0870 220 2223*
The tallest observation wheel in the world offers views of up to 30 miles over the sprawl of London. Gliding so smoothly and slowly that you barely notice the river dropping away beneath you, the 30-minute flight treats you to views of virtually all the major landmarks in London.

Old Royal Observatory, *Greenwich Royal Park, SE10. Tel: 020 8858 4422*
There aren't too many places in the world where you can stand with one leg in a different hemisphere from the other, but Greenwich is one. The Observatory is on a hill from which you can look across the whole of London.

Monument, *Fish Street Hill, EC2*
Over 300 tightly spiralling steps take you up 60m to the top of the Monument, built between 1671 and 1677 to commemorate those who lost their lives in the Great Fire of London. Standing beneath the bronze urn of flames, the four-sided platform gives uninterrupted views across to St Paul's, the London Eye, the City and Tower Bridge.



Tate Modern, *Bankside, SE1. Tel: 020 7887 8000*
The ex-power station commands fine views from its prime location on the banks of the Thames. The best way to soak up the scenery is from the public cafe on the seventh floor or the members cafe on the floor below.

Tower Bridge, *SE1. Tel: 020 7403 3761*
One of London's most famous landmarks, Tower Bridge straddles the Thames in the east of the City. A lift takes you to the top of the 25m-high towers where you can stroll along the walkways for views of the City and Docklands.

St Paul's Cathedral, *EC4. Tel: 020 7236 4128*
Despite the modern skyscrapers that have sprung up around it, the massive dome of St Paul's still dominates the London skyline. One of the finest views in the city can be had from the Stone Gallery, reached by 378 steps. But the climbing doesn't stop there: the highest point visitors can go to—the Golden Gallery—is another 152 steps up.

Primrose Hill, *NW3. Tel: 020 7486 7905*
Every self-respecting celebrity's favourite haunt, Primrose Hill is London at its leafiest best. The hill itself is 63m high and is one of the capital's six legally protected views, making it a popular spot for picnics.

Westway Sports Centre, *Crowthorne Road, W10. Tel: 020 8969 0992*
The largest indoor climbing centre in the country has 350 routes for novices and experienced climbers alike. It's the closest you'll get in London to hanging off a mountain.

Oxo Tower, *Barge House Street, SE1. Tel: 020 7401 3610*
On the rooftop of the Oxo Tower, situated on the South Bank, is a free viewing platform, from which you can look upriver to St Paul's, Tower Bridge and Canary Wharf. The view can also be enjoyed with refreshments from the Oxo Tower Restaurant, Bar and Brasserie on the same floor.

King Henry VIII's Mound, *Richmond Park, Surrey. Tel: 020 8948 3209*
Richmond Park is the largest National Nature Reserve in London and is roamed by herds of red and fallow deer. Climb the Mound on a clear day for an uninterrupted view across London to St Paul's.

Hyatt Carlton Towers Hotel, *Cadogan Place, SW1. Tel: 020 7235 1234*
If you thought keeping fit is uninspiring, think again. The Carlton Towers hotel boasts a ninth-floor health centre called the Peak, with floor-to-ceiling glass windows offering stunning views of the city.

Windows Bar, *London Hilton, Park Lane, W1. Tel: 020 7208 4021*
To celebrate the Hilton's 40th anniversary this year, there's a new look for the Windows Bar on the 28th floor. Cocktails, champagne, one of the largest cigar collections in the UK, and exhibitions by up-and-coming artists are on offer to accompany the views of the London skyline.

Vertigo 42, *Tower 42, Old Broad Street, EC2. Tel: 020 7877 7842*
At 183m, the former NatWest Tower was the tallest building in the UK for 10 years. Now it can only lay claim to having the highest bar in the city. Vertigo 42. At this height the bubbles in your champagne will certainly go to your head, but there's a tempting food menu to counter that. And the tallest of them all...

Canary Wharf, *One Canada Square, E14. Tel: 020 7418 2783*
At 244m, One Canada Square (as it's officially named) is the tallest building in the UK. Although it's not open to the public, it's worth a visit simply to stand at the bottom and gawp up at the structure.

Magnificent views from the South Bank's Oxo Tower, left, and Vertigo 42, above.

WIN A PIMM'S PARTY ON THE BA LONDON EYE

BA London Eye is offering ILN readers the chance to enjoy a flight in quintessentially English style. As one of a number of hospitality packages on offer, the London Eye arranges Pimm's and strawberries' capsules, in which ice-cold Pimm's with strawberries and cream are served to you and up to 25 guests by a private waiter as you gently climb above the capital. Perfect for business or pleasure, the capsule normally costs £660, including VAT, but we have one to give away free to the first person whose name is drawn. For a chance to win, send your name, address and telephone number on a postcard to: BA London Eye Offer, ILN, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PF, before July 5, 2003.

PEAK SHOWS:

London is marking the anniversary of the first ascent of Everest with "Endeavour on Everest"—three shows on May 29, 2003, at the Odeon, Leicester Square, with accounts of the 1953 expedition from the original team. Hosted by Sir David Attenborough, the veterans will put on slide and film shows, and will be joined by other greats, including Sir Chris Bonington. There is also a Royal Gala Performance, to be attended by the Queen and Prince Philip. Tickets: £25 for the 10am and 1pm shows; £50-£75 for the Royal Gala at 5.40pm. Call 020 7591 3034 to book.



Nick Foulkes discovers how a transfusion of glamour has brought London's grand old hotels into the 21st century and an international clientele to their sophisticated bars and restaurants.

SUITE SUCCESS

I REMEMBER PRECISELY when it was that I realised that London's hotels had finally shaken off all traces of their stately-home-meets-Fawlty Towers image. It was seven o'clock on a Sunday evening and I was lying face down on the floor of a darkened room, naked except for a towel arranged like a nappy, while Kingsley Ogedengbe, a six-foot-tall former athlete, walked up and down on my back, massaging my vertebrae with his size 12 feet, according to a process called Chavutti-Thai. "You are looking at the creator, founder and sole practitioner," said Kingsley in a tone intended to inspire confidence, as a heel that had been marinated in essential oils suddenly appeared between my neck and shoulder.

I was not in some hip holistic therapy centre in Notting Hill. I was in Mayfair, on the sixth floor of Claridge's to be precise.

Of all the great London hotels, Claridge's is perhaps the most evocative. In 1812, James Mivart opened a hotel at 51 Brook Street and subsequently bought four neighbouring houses to create the prestigious Mivart's. In 1854, William Claridge, who owned a hotel at 49 Brook Street, snapped up Mivart's, giving him a full row of buildings in one of London's most desirable locations. He sold the renamed Claridge's in 1881 due to bad health, and eventually it came into the possession of Richard D'Oyly Carte in 1894, who over four years demolished and then rebuilt it in its current form.

However, what this prim 19th-century Mayfair façade gives no hint of is an interior over which the decadent art-deco period has run wild.

Once arguably the most reserved and forbidding of London hotels—it was here that Winston Churchill sought refuge after losing the 1945 election—the Mayfair residence has been given an intravenous hit of high-octane glamour. The unthinkable has not just been thought, it has happened: Claridge's is cool, the venue of choice for the smart set. Tables at the Gordon Ramsay restaurant, which was recently awarded a Michelin star, are among the most sought after in London. At night the Macanudo Fumoir, an elegant leather-clad cigar bar, is thick with the intoxicating blue smoke of the finest handmade cigars.

Claridge's is the auberge of choice of Gwyneth Paltrow, Ben Affleck, Kevin Spacey, Donatella Versace, Sam Mendes, Pierce Brosnan and George Clooney. Jade Jagger held a pyjama party here for an intimate group of five dozen babydoll beauties to mark her 30th birthday. Sophie Dahl has seen fit to hold a smart party, with a white-tie dress code, at Claridge's.

The transformation of Claridge's began when London's most celebrated restaurant designer, David Collins, was let loose on what had been a buffet restaurant called the Causerie. It was the sort of place you would only otherwise have encountered between the covers of a Nancy Mitford novel. Collins transformed this gastronomic ossuary into an extremely tempting cocktail bar. "English snobs said don't change it," recalls Collins, "but they only went there once a year and considered themselves regulars."

In truth, I doubt that anyone went there quite as frequently as once a year, unlike the bar which has replaced it. Claridge's Bar is where you bump into a staggering array of eye candy: models and designers, photographers and stylists, princes and diplomatic leaders. It is the sort of place where you might spot Roberto Cavalli or Henry Kissinger.

It helps that, as well as Collins, a rather grand French/American designer called Thierry Despont has revamped the foyer and the restaurant. Despont is the sort of guy Marie Antoinette would have hired to give Versailles the once over, or that the Tsar would have brought in to renovate the Kremlin.

However, now that neither the Bourbons nor the Romanovs are still in business, Despont has to content himself with the restoration of the Statue of Liberty and working for America's business royalty—people such as Ralph Lauren, Bill Gates and John Ceriale.

Ceriale is the man behind the transformation of Claridge's. In the summer of 1998, the Savoy Group was sold for £520 million to Blackstone, an American merchant bank, which owns hotels in both Europe and America. During January of the same year Blackstone took on this visionary hotel adviser to run its hotel business. An alumnus of Loyola College and the University of Nevada, Ceriale is now 50, and has spent his working life in hotels. He was under no illusions about how his arrival on London's luxury hotel scene would be greeted. "The initial thought that the press had

was that we were Americans and a bank, not a hotel operating company, that we were not going to understand the sensitivity and nuances of operating these luxury institutions."

It was he who saw Claridge's potential as a beacon of grandeur in a world of identikit high-street minimalism and cheap cookie-cutter quirkiness.

As part of his enthusiastic Anglophilia, Ceriale has also resurrected the career of another British grande dame, Nina Campbell. She has revamped the funereal Connaught Hotel which, with its new Gordon Ramsay Italian restaurant, Menu, with light and delicious dishes prepared by Ramsay protégée Angela Hartnett, has been kicked straight from the early 20th century into the early 21st.

Ceriale has given The Berkeley Hotel, another of Savoy's old guard, a transfusion of vitality with the addition of a funky watering hole, called the Blue Bar. Fusion superchef Jean-Georges Vongerichten has been invited to relaunch a restaurant here, while Marcus Wareing is moving his acclaimed restaurant Pétrus into the space recently occupied by Pierre Koffman. Wareing is also going to be busy at The Savoy, where he is taking over the Savoy Grill. Also, Laurent-Perrier is sponsoring a champagne bar and there are rumours that Rose Gray and Ruthie Rogers are also about to open a branch of the River Café in what is now the Savoy's River Restaurant.

Ceriale has become one of the most influential people in London hotels because the Savoy Group occupies such a totemic status. "They are great buildings in great locations. We have got four of the great hotels of the world," says Ceriale of the Savoy Group. It is his choice of the word "world" that is revealing. Ceriale thinks of the Savoy Group in a global rather than local context. "I want to attract all types of international people and that is why, with partnerships with great chefs and great interior decorators, we have developed sophisticated venues to attract good-looking people who are capable of spending."

His approach is also shared by many other leading operators in London. Sir Terence Conran, who launched the successful City hotel the Great Eastern at Liverpool Street Station, believes that "hoteliers were complacent when there was a lot of tourism". Now, however, they are having to make their hotels much more exciting.

"They are more interesting and much more pleasant for customers to stay at and they have more to do with contemporary life," says Conran.

He might also have added the word "spa" to restaurants and bars. Ten years ago in London, hotels' concessions to fitness were nothing like as developed as they are today. As well as the innovative treatments being served up on the sixth floor of Claridge's, there is a sleekly holistic Agua Spa at Sanderson, the Eve Lom therapies at the Dorchester, and an Asian-style E'spa spa at the Mandarin Hotel on Hyde Park. At the Great Eastern, Sir Terence took the intriguing step of inviting cult cosmetics brand Ren to open a boutique.

Certainly Conran's Great Eastern, with its variety of restaurants and bars as well as its GE club and its chic shops, is a paradigm of the new, imaginative approach to hoteliering in London. Indeed, Conran has instituted a frisson of interest in London's railway hotels; neglected for years they are back in vogue with interesting developments at the station hotels of Paddington and Victoria—at the latter there is even a branch of the Covent Garden classic, Christopher's.

As well as Christopher's at the Thistle Hotel adjoining Victoria Station, Conran's Great Eastern and Gordon Ramsay's involvement with Ceriale's Savoy Group, there is the universally lauded David Collins-designed Locanda Locatelli at the Churchill Hotel on Portman Square and the Michelin-starred Foliage at the Mandarin Hotel overlooking Hyde Park.

Nor is it just London that is experiencing a dramatic increase in the level of its hotel experience. Recently Sir Terence Conran had to visit Birmingham; he was unable to book a room at the city's new Hotel du Vin and was forced instead to check in to a Malmaison, with which he was pleasantly surprised.

"Malmaison in Birmingham was so much better than I thought it would be," he commented. However, he feels it necessary to point out, in the nicest possible way, that the inspiration came from London. "I was pleased to say that they had looked very hard at Great Eastern."





Get a room

The Berkeley Hotel, Wilton Place, SW1 (020 7235 6000); Churchill Hotel, 30 Portman Square, W1 (020 7486 5800); Claridge's, Brook Street, W1 (020 7629 8860); The Connaught, Carlos Place, W1 (020 7499 7070); Mandarin Hotel, 66 Knightsbridge, SW1 (020 7235 2000); Great Eastern, Liverpool Street, EC2 (020 7618 5000); The Savoy, Strand, WC2 (020 7836 4343); Thistle Victoria, Buckingham Palace Road, SW1 (0870 333 9120).

David Collins designed the Blue Bar at The Berkeley, previous page, and Claridge's Bar, above left. Above right, Gordon Ramsay attracts discerning diners to Claridge's. Top right, Christopher's at the Thistle Victoria.



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London's College of Arms has been designing insignia since the days of knights and jousting tournaments, but today's applicants are more likely to be top businessmen or pop stars. Theo Hobson talks to Peter Gwynn-Jones about the unique art of heraldry.

STARS AND GARTERS

ARE YOU a person of distinction and merit? If so, then you might be interested in commissioning your very own coat of arms. Don't worry, you don't have to be an aristocrat – the procedure is thoroughly meritocratic these days. And don't be ashamed if you're not sure whether your achievements are best summed up by a lion rampant or unicorn couchant – the College of Arms is here to help you decide.

Dating from the 1530s, the College is located on Queen Victoria Street in the heart of London, between St Paul's Cathedral and the river. The view of Late Modern weather inconclusive, for this establishment has the air of a small, provincial museum or a medieval Oxbridge college. The beautiful, wood-panelled hall has an exhibition of crests, in the form of painted wooden sculptures. Churchill's lion sticks out its tongue.

I am here to meet Peter Gwynn-Jones. A middle-aged man in a smart pinstripe suit, he welcomes me to his office, which is spacious and traditional – leather chairs, no computers. He's a gentleman of the old school: formal, precise and rather courteous about what he says.

Gwynn-Jones is not known around here as Mr Gwynn-Jones, but as Garter King of Arms, or Garter for short. He

Above, Paul McCartney's coat of arms, featuring a guitar motif and a liver bird. The motto reads "behold my heart". Right, the assembled heralds of the College of Arms, with Garter King of Arms Peter Gwynn-Jones, seated.



Below, Tesco's arms. The badgers refer to Broxbourne (which means badger's brook), where the supermarket was founded. The legend reads "merchants will grow together". Peter Gwynn-Jones, right, has been a herald for 37 years. Far right, Prince William's coat of arms.

is a herald. This means that he is a servant of the Queen, with duties relating to heraldry. In the early medieval period, the chief function of heralds was the proclamation and organisation of jousting tournaments. The knights taking part in these tournaments were identified by the arms they bore on their shields and the crests they wore on their helmets. The heralds were rather like sports commentators: they gained extensive knowledge of these identifying marks, and soon acquired duties in regulating their use. Because coats of arms were hereditary, heralds also became expert in genealogy. In 1484, King Richard III granted them a charter of incorporation as the College of Arms, with a house in the City of London. They moved to the present site in 1555.

Today there are 10 heralds who work at the College of Arms and a further six who have part-time duties. The main work is creating new coats of arms, but there are other tasks. Heralds take part in major royal events, including the annual opening of Parliament, state funerals and coronations, and in June every year they participate in the procession and service of the Sovereign and Knights Companion of the Order of the Garter at Windsor Castle. As well as participating, they also help to plan these events, under the supervision of the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk, whose duty as titular head of the college is hereditary. At all the events heralds wear their distinctive medieval uniform, the tabard—a coat embroidered with the royal arms. Besides these official duties, and the issuing of new arms, the heralds help with enquiries—everything from tracing an ancestor to identifying a crest on a silver spoon.

I ask Gwynn-Jones how one becomes a herald: is it a full-time, lifelong career, or is it more normal to do something else first and then move into heraldry later in life? "There are various routes," he says, "usually beginning with a good degree in history or law." He himself has been a herald for 37 years.

Each herald runs a private practice—his income is made up of fees from new recipients of arms: these include newly ennobled Lords, and institutions and businesses, such as schools and shops. In 2001 there were 120 grants in all, of which 15 were to corporate bodies and 105 to individuals (including 15 life peers and 11 knights). They included John Major, Cardinal Murphy O'Connor, John Birt and the Institute of Indirect Taxation. Other recent "armigers" include John Mortimer, Donald Sinden, Sir John Mills, Ruth Rendell, PD James, Sir Cliff Richard, Sir Alex Ferguson, Colin Cowdray, Roy Clarke and Yehudi Menuhin.



The herald works closely with each applicant, undertaking extensive research for them, deciding upon a design and then issuing the official "letters patent". The coat of arms is granted not in pictorial form but in the form of a verbal description. The letters patent is issued by the King of Arms, acting on behalf of the Crown.

Rather surprisingly, the College is self-supporting. Although it is a branch of the Royal Household it receives no public funds. (Some would say that it offers a good model for the future of the monarchy.)

So, who qualifies for the honour of receiving heraldic arms? "Anyone who falls within one of the categories of eligibility," he says. Presumably I would automatically qualify if I were a successful businessman, or a multi-millionaire? "We accept applications from those who are persons of distinction, and that would certainly include a successful businessman—unless there were a particular reason to withhold arms." The College's website suggests some criteria for eligibility: "awards or honours from the Crown, civil or military commissions, university degrees, professional qualifications, public and charitable services, and eminence or good standing in national or local life". Applicants should submit a petition (known as a memorial) to the Earl Marshal—but first they must make an appointment with a herald, ideally sending a CV in advance.

The fee for a personal grant of arms and crest is £3,275; for a non-profit making body it is £7,200; and for a commercial company £10,800.

It is interesting to see what a broad range of people choose this distinction—from Elton John to Alan Sugar. What does Mr Gwynn-Jones think motivates people to commission a coat of arms? "Well it wouldn't be in my interest to question their motivation too much, because then they might question it themselves. But I would say that one motivation is that this is something you can leave for your descendants, safe in the knowledge that the taxman can't take it away."



"ONE MOTIVATION [FOR HAVING A COAT OF ARMS] IS THAT IT IS SOMETHING YOU CAN LEAVE FOR YOUR DESCENDANTS THAT THE TAXMAN CANNOT TAKE AWAY"

Once the Earl Marshal has approved a petition, the designing of the arms can begin. The wishes of the applicant are taken into account as far as possible, but the College retains the final say.

A new coat of arms will usually relate to the person's profession, achievements and sometimes family. For instance Richard Adams, the author of *Watership Down*, opted for rabbits holding quills.

Is there any restriction on what images are used? There are no formal restrictions, he explains, but the use of modern technology is keenly discouraged. "It dates so rapidly compared with the traditional images. For example, an arrow is a symbol of speed, so even though it might not be as fast as a bullet, it is preferable on a coat of arms. Sometimes we do represent modern technology, but in an indirect way: very often there's a geometric solution." He produces a big book and shows me some recently commissioned arms. "This is the Channel Tunnel," he says, pointing to a pattern of interlocking red and blue. "And this is Tesco, featuring cloves, the traditional symbol of grocers."

What happens when people make up their own arms, without consulting the college—is that legal? "The self-assumption of arms is not strictly illegal, but pinching someone else's arms is." So if I was setting up a private school, say, why shouldn't I just use fake arms, why should I do it properly? "Well it often happens that someone, an old boy for instance, will care that it is done properly. We usually manage to bring people into line."

One would assume that heraldry is a dying tradition, but in reality there are far more arms being created now than ever before: around 150 every year. So the modern herald is not just a guardian of tradition—he also wants to widen that tradition, to bring others into the club.

The College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street, London EC4
www.college-of-arms.gov.uk.







TEATIME IN TOWN

From mid-afternoon celebrity baby showers to Vivienne Westwood-designed tea sets by Wedgwood, the ritual of taking tea is fashionable again. Clare Brundle looks at this old English tradition and finds out where to go for the capital's best cuppa.

DATING BACK TO the 18th century, English afternoon tea is credited to the Duchess of Bedford, who sought to alleviate hunger pangs with a small four o'clock meal of tea and cakes. Around the same time, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich decided to place ham between slices of bread, thus creating the perfect union of tastes. An instant hit among society, the practice of taking tea mid-afternoon provided the perfect opportunity for friends to exchange news, and has become increasingly elaborate over the years. As Henry James wrote: "There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea." While no longer an everyday event, there are a growing number of London hot spots where this peculiarly British ceremony can be enjoyed, either in traditional style or in a more innovative fashion.

Winner of the Tea Council's Top Tea Place 2002 award, the **Dorchester's Promenade** continues to win praise for its "quite spectacular" traditional English afternoon tea. With a spread created by a dedicated chef and 15 pastry chefs, it is hard to refuse anything, from the delicate finger sandwiches of smoked salmon, cream cheese, egg, chicken and cucumber, to the warm melt-in-the mouth scones, mini fruit tartlets, strawberry macaroons and rich chocolate marquis. Wash everything down with a wide selection of infusions served in Wedgwood cups of eggshell-thin bone china.

Close by on Park Lane, the team in the elegant **Four Seasons Hotel's Lounge** proves each day why the group tops the service chart. Offering one of London's most innovative and wide-ranging tea menus, the hotel's very own "Anniversary Blend" by Sam Twining of R Twining & Company is a must. While traditional tea offers the usual sandwich fillings, ask to mix and match with more exotic choices, such as hummus and chives, sun-dried tomatoes and goats' cheese or sesame chicken with ginger. Follow warm scones with lime meringue tart, raspberry cheesecake, mocha delight and fruit cake.

Wander through Kensington Gardens to find the place where royalty once sipped tea—the light-filled, 18th-century **Orangery**, decorated with white panelling, cornice and 24 Corinthian columns. Originally used during winter months as a greenhouse and in the summer for court entertainment, the Orangery now opens daily to serve light lunches and afternoon tea. Choose a single slice from the tempting pile of cakes displayed or The Orangery Tea—cream cheese and cucumber sandwiches, fruit scones and, the pièce de résistance, Orangery sponge cake.

As expected in a Jeffrey Chodorow and Ian Schrager establishment, finger sandwiches and Victoria sponge do not feature in the **Sanderson**'s new **Teaspoon**. Instead, expect juicy roast vegetables in ciabatta, smoked salmon on a toasted baguette and rocket-filled pastrami atop horseradish-laced country bread. Old-fashioned scones are replaced with "the best donut in London"—a halo of fluffy batter with cream and fresh fruits—and accompanied by 13 types of tea served in ornate Japanese pots. Don't miss the rare antioxidant-rich China White or fragrant Summer Tea blends.

Chai Bizarre, 16 Albemarle Street, W1 (020 7629 8540)
Chintamani, 122 Jermyn Street, SW1 (020 7839 2020)
The Lounge at the Four Seasons Hotel, Hamilton Place, Park Lane, W1 (020 7499 0888)
The Orangery at Kensington Palace, Kensington Gardens, W8 (0870 751 5170)
The Promenade at The Dorchester, Park Lane, W1 (020 7629 8888)
Rose Lounge, Sofitel St James, 6 Waterloo Place, SW1 (020 7747 2200)
Sketch, 9 Conduit Street, W1 (0870 777 4488)
Teaspoon at the Sanderson, 50 Berners Street, W1 (020 7300 1444)
Tuscan at St Martin's Lane, 45 St Martin's Lane, WC2 (020 7300 5588)
Yauatcha, Broadwick House, 16-17 Broadwick Street, W1 (020 7436 8313)

The sleek **Tuscan** in Ian Schrager's equally trendy West End St Martin's Lane hotel also boasts an award-winning tea with an Italian twist. Crispy ciabatta sandwiches are filled with mozzarella and tomato, smoked salmon, and Italian meats with roasted vegetables, followed by such Roman delights as pistachio and cherry cream-filled brandy snaps.

Creating competition is the **Rose Lounge**'s afternoon tea at the new Sofitel St James. With a contemporary take on chintz, the mix of hot-pink sofas, porcelain lampstands, floral cushions and rose-bud china creates a kitsch English country home environment. Arrive hungry, as a generous round of sandwiches is followed by tartlets, macaroons and chocolate treats, freshly baked scones, and then impossible-to-resist home-made chocolate, sponge, citrus and fruit cakes.

While traditional English tea is clearly going strong, London has also seen the rise in interesting Eastern-inspired alternatives. **Chai Bizarre**, London's first authentic Indian Tea Bar, opened its Mayfair doors in April to offer quality Indian teas alongside novel Indian savouries and sweets. Well-known favourites such as Assam and Nilgiri join designer tea drinks, all accompanied by spicy specialities such as the chicken tikkawich.

For more Eastern flavours, head to Jermyn Street's beautiful new Ottoman restaurant **Chintamani**. Taking half an hour to prepare, and served in a bulbous glass, the Assam-like Turkish tea is perfect for washing down crispy pockets of cheese-filled borek.

China's influence on tea-drinking habits is inescapable, even at über-trendy **Sketch**'s pretty ground-floor **Parlour**. Team Jasmine "white", Cui You "blue-green" or Gui Hong "Chinese-style, English-style" teas with a rich chocolate Balzac or violet-topped Cardinal from the glistening case of patisseries.

This autumn, expect further Chinese treats at Alan Yau's **Yauatcha**, where freshly baked Chinese pastries will be sold alongside over 200 teas. No wonder Emperor Qianlong is quoted as saying: "The country cannot do without a ruler for one single day. The ruler cannot do without a cup of tea for one single day."



Clockwise from left, sink into the hot-pink sofas of the Rose Lounge and try their home-made cakes; the elegant setting of The Orangery at Kensington Palace; sip Turkish tea from a traditional cup at Chintamani; afternoon tea at the Four Seasons Hotel's Lounge, accompanied by a harpist.



POWER OF THE PRESS

Vibrant and challenging, intrusive and cruel, newspapers have changed a great deal in recent years, says Stephen Glover. But, although broadsheets have dumbed down and sales of red tops have fallen, the power of the press is greater than ever before.

THE FLEET STREET I entered as a young journalist in 1978 is a lost world, which seems almost as far away as 1878. Nearly all the national newspapers had offices in or near the street. The old linotype machines clattered in what were really huge factories, and the pubs were packed with journalists late into the afternoon. At midnight, delivery vans were parked bonnet-to-tail outside the offices of *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Express*, and you could hear the roar of presses as they spewed out millions of copies for the breakfast tables of the nation.

There are no newspapers left in Fleet Street, and its pubs no longer echo to the sound of journalists' voices. The offices of *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Express* are occupied by American banks. Today's reporter or feature writer probably sits somewhere in London's Docklands, peering forlornly at a computer screen for most of the day. He or she may meet a colleague from a different paper only rarely. There is little alcohol drunk and, one feels, there is less mirth than there used to be.

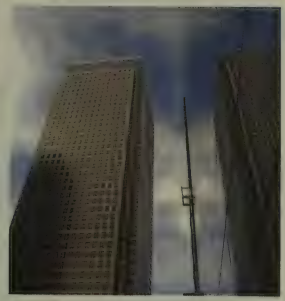
This has been a staggering revolution, as complete as anything that has happened in British life. How I miss the old Fleet Street. I miss the derring-do of its foreign correspondents such as the *Daily Mail*'s Peter Younghusband who, as a younger reporter, swam a mile ashore to cover a coup in Zanzibar after the skipper of his Arab dhow had taken fright and dropped anchor. I miss the colourful, sometimes preposterous figures with their gargantuan expense accounts, including the New York correspondent who once put a camel on his expenses. I miss the camaraderie, and the freely offered advice of older and more experienced journalists, even those who worked for rival newspapers.

And then, just when I am getting too sentimental for my own good, I remember the strikes that closed down newspapers for days, weeks and even months. I remember the ubiquitous misprints ("literals" as journalists call them) and the newspapers which left ink on your hands. It may have been a jollier, more vivid world, but it was also inefficient, overmanned and sometimes almost insane.

When I was a young journalist, an old hand told me a story that I half believed and, even now, by no means discount. At *The Daily Telegraph* there was said to be a personage called "the Mist Man". Every evening, between bouts of drinking at the nearby pub, the Mist Man would ascend to the sixth floor of *The Daily Telegraph*'s formidable building in Fleet Street and scour from the window the concrete world beneath. If he saw so much as a pocket of mist, he would inform the appropriate "father of the chapel" who would "call out" the drivers until management, terrified that the paper would not be distributed, paid over "mist money".

It is one of those stories which may not be strictly true, but it has a poetic truth. Newspapers have entered the modern world since I was a young journalist. Most are now well-run businesses with marketing departments, cost-control centres and human resources executives. The key moment came in January 1986 when Rupert Murdoch moved his newspapers overnight—*The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sun* and the *News of the World*—from offices near Fleet Street to a secretly assembled fortress in Wapping. His aim was to break the old unions and, after 12 months of sometimes violent and intimidating picketing, he succeeded. Wapping was a







state-of-the-art newspaper factory—ugly, soulless, but devastatingly efficient. Where Rupert Murdoch went, other newspapers soon followed. Much of what has happened to our national newspapers, good and bad, can be traced back to that move to Wapping.

Many of them became seriously profitable. Some of those profits were eaten away after Murdoch started a price war in September 1993: he slashed the cover price of *The Times*, forcing *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent* to follow suit. But there was still enough money—which means enough advertising—in the booming 1990s to give us ever fatter and glossier newspapers. Publishers ordered spanking new presses which could produce colour photographs that were no longer a joke, as well as multiple sections which soaked up the extra advertising. Newspapers were suddenly bursting with sections about travel, property and lifestyle. News often seemed less important than it had done. Particularly at the weekend, reading a newspaper became a little like visiting a supermarket, in the old days the process had been more akin to going to your local shop. Now, there was far more on show than a single reader could ever want, and you learned to pick and choose.

Yes, newspapers have changed. Perhaps the biggest transformation is their near universal obsession with celebrities. The tabloids always ran stories about film and pop stars, but over the past decade the once august broadsheets have increasingly done the same. Ten years ago you would hardly ever see a picture of a starlet or model on the front page of *The Times*. Now there may be two or three in a week, and sometimes they appear by the masthead, advertising untold delights within. *The Daily Telegraph* has practically adopted Elizabeth Hurley. Even *The Independent* has stepped off its pedestal. As for the tabloids, particularly the so-called red tops, they have taken their fascination for celebrities to new heights. Sometimes the coverage is far less reverential than the stars would wish, and there have been several court cases.

Naomi Campbell sent a writ to the *Daily Mirror* after it photographed her leaving a drug rehabilitation clinic. Catherine Zeta-Jones recently sued *Hello!* after it snatched pictures of her wedding which she thought unflattering. The magazine was found by the judge to have breached a commercial confidence, though he did not think there had been an invasion of privacy. Indeed, it would have been quite difficult to see that there had been one, given that Zeta-Jones and husband Michael Douglas had thought the wedding unprivate enough to admit a photographer from the rival *OK!* magazine, which paid £1 million for the privilege.

The greatest celebrity of all, of course, was Diana, Princess of Wales. For the best part of a decade her image was appropriated by the press—tabloids and broadsheets alike—in the noble cause of selling more newspapers. When she died, they turned her into a saint, and worshipped at her shrine. (This, incidentally, allowed them to continue to print her image.) But when she was alive, she was not always treated with respect, and the papers would think nothing of publishing photographs of her which suggested that she had cellulite, or printing stories about her love life. She became the star of a national soap opera which was staged by the press. There was, undoubtedly, an element of cruelty in newspapers' depiction of Diana—and even more in their treatment of her husband Prince Charles—which was consonant with the new, less deferential age.

Newspapers scream more loudly than they did in the old days. However, they actually sell fewer copies than they used to, with total sales of about 12 million every weekday. This is much more than the circulation of national titles in either France or Italy, each of which has a population roughly equal in number to Britain's. Over the past 20 years the sales of the red tops have fallen by almost a quarter. In the middle-market, the *Daily Express* has more than halved its circulation, while the *Daily Mail* has grown by about a quarter. Only the dumbed-down broadsheet market has increased, but not by a huge amount. Despite the overall decline—perhaps partially because of it—newspapers seem to wield more power than ever before, and are feared and courted by leading politicians. The power of the press is not so much to influence legislation—though it may do that at the margins—it is to bring down ministers who have lied or been corrupt or merely incompetent. During the 1990s *The Guardian* led the posse which ran down a number of Tory ministers. Since the advent of New Labour, the press has been at least partly responsible for the removal on two occasions of Peter Mandelson, and has notched up other less prominent scalps. No one is off limits, as Cherie Blair found out recently, when *The Mail on Sunday* and the *Daily Mail* discovered that she had used the services of Peter Foster, a convicted conman, in buying two flats in Bristol.

The sheer animus of the press, and its attack-dog attitude towards elected politicians, can prove exhausting. The reflective reader may wonder whether we are heading towards a state dominated by Torquemadas who claim democratic legitimacy from the mere act of selling newspapers. But, if the din is sometimes disturbing, it also bespeaks a passionate and vivacious press which believes in holding politicians to account. There is choice too—choice between right wing and left wing, and choice, though less marked than it was, between broadsheet and mid-market tabloid, and mid-market tabloid and red top. Whatever criticisms may be made of our national newspapers, they remain vibrant and challenging. But they can also be intrusive, brutal and cruel.

Some people wonder whether we will continue to have so many titles, but this is the kind of talk one usually hears in an advertising recession, in which state newspapers now find themselves. My bet is that most of them, and perhaps all, will be around in 25 years, by which time I will have probably long put down my pen.

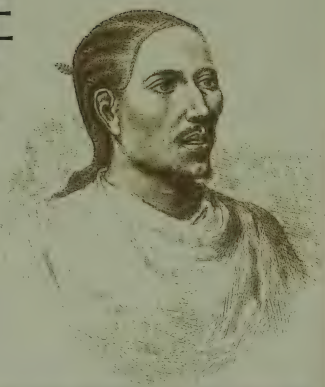
Quite recently I found myself walking along Fleet Street late at night after a dinner in the City. There were no vans queuing up to deliver papers. Windows which would have once been ablaze with light were dark; bankers do not work as late as journalists. On my left, by St Bride's Church, I passed the bust of the great journalist TP O'Connor who, the inscription says, could lay bare the bones of a statesman with his pen. It is easy to become maudlin, to regret the passing of the old Fleet Street, with its emphasis on news and its eccentric denizens. But the old Fleet Street was doomed. What we have now is alive, and will last.

Above left, newspaper vendors in a bustling Fleet Street in 1955. Top, Canary Wharf and Docklands became the headquarters of most of Britain's major daily newspapers after Rupert Murdoch moved his empire to Wapping in 1986. Above, *The Sun*'s offices in Bouverie Street, off Fleet Street, just before the move.

ART ON THE FRONT LINE

In the days before satellite link-ups, artists' impressions formed the basis for war reportage, writes Laura Richardson.

THE WAR in Iraq took a heavy toll on journalists, raising suggestions that the front line should be reserved for those trained to fight. But the practice of attaching reporters to military divisions is not as modern or revolutionary as television executives would have us believe. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 saw the creation of the first war correspondents as we know them, when six artists were commissioned by *The Illustrated London News* to follow British troops into battle and send home sketches of events. Although photography existed, action shots required lengthy exposure times—not exactly practical on the battlefield—so it fell to the war artists to illustrate the realities of war for readers. Known as "specials", their drawings soon became an integral part of war journalism. Although accuracy was sometimes questionable (many of the scenes illustrated were based upon second-hand accounts rather than actually witnessed by the artists), their emotive quality helped to rally public opinion behind campaigns being fought in far-flung corners of the Empire. The demand for illustrations was such that being a "special" proved a lucrative business, although not without its perils—as today's war correspondents are only too aware.





◀ ROBERT LANDELLS
1833-1877

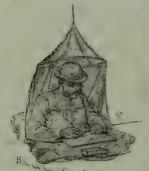
Served as Special War Artist at *ILN* from 1855-1871 and was awarded the Prussian Iron Cross for his coverage of the Franco-Prussian campaign of 1870-71. This sketch is taken from his time in the Crimea, showing Lord Gough, Marshal Pelissier and staff inspecting the troops.

▼ HENRY CHARLES SEPPINGS WRIGHT
1850-1937

Joined *ILN* in 1888 and covered the Ashanti, Grecian, Spanish-American and Balkan wars. The sketch, below, depicts the battle of Benin, 1897.

◀ WILLIAM SIMPSON
1823-1899

Simpson was the first "special" artist, cutting his teeth in the Crimean War, which earned him the nickname Crimean Simpson. This sketch is of Dajazmach Kasa, Ruler of Tegray, whom Simpson met while with British troops during the Abyssinian campaign in 1868.



▶ MELTON PRIOR
1845-1910

He covered every war from the Ashanti War in 1873, from which The King's Slaughtering Palace, right, is taken, until his death in 1910. While reporting from the Zulu Wars he was among the party that found the body of Napoleon's eldest son. The conditions in which the artists worked are depicted in his sketches from the Nile expedition, above.







◀ RICHARD CATON WOODVILLE, JNR
1856-1927

Renowned for the quality and accuracy of his battle scenes, this sketch, left, shows the storming of the Dargai Ridge by the Gordon Highlanders. Piper Findlater, in the foreground, is continuing to play despite being wounded in both legs.



◀ FREDRIC VILLIERS
1851-1922

The first correspondent to have a cinematograph camera in the 1900s, Villiers was awarded 12 service medals and served in numerous military campaigns. His sketch on the front cover of *ILN* on January 9, 1915, left, shows the historic Christmas truce in the trenches between German and British troops during World War I.

▼ SAMUEL BEGG
1886-1916

A frequent contributor to *ILN*, his style is characteristic of later illustrators in its heavy colouring and technical perfection, as this drawing of the British Territorials charging German trenches at Loos, below, exemplifies.







◀ BRYAN DE GRINEAU
1883-1957

Served as Captain in the Royal Artillery during World War I and was appointed Special War Artist at *ILN* for the second, from which these sketches are taken. British soldiers stop a German tank on the Dunkirk-Cassel road, far left; and left, a typical scene at north-eastern aerodrome—loading up Whitley bombers in preparation for a night raid.

▼ CE TURNER
1883-1965

Covered World War II for *ILN*. His skills at marine art, for which he was noted, are evident in this sketch, below, depicting Blackburn "Skua" dive-bombers of the Fleet Air Arm attacking a German cruiser in Bergen harbour.





[toptickets]

sizzling summer fun from stage to screen, galleries to concert halls

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theatre

Franco Zeffirelli directs Joan Plowright in Pirandello, Ralph Fiennes broods in Ibsen, & Simon Russell Beale plays philosophical games in Stoppard. Shakespeare gets a samurai make-over with the RSC's *Coriolanus*, alfresco stagings of *The Dream* in Regent's Park & an all-female *Taming of the Shrew* at the Globe.

ABSOLUTELY! (PERHAPS) The distinguished stage & film director Franco Zeffirelli returns to the London stage after 25 years for this new version of Pirandello's 1920s play *Right You Are If You Think So*. It's a drama of multiple perspectives, as one would expect from the writer of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, in which the arrival of an enigmatic couple & their eccentric mother-in-law causes the local village gossipmongers to run riot. The cast includes Joan Plowright, Oliver Ford Davies, Liza Tarbuck & Anna Carteret. *Wyndham's, Charing Cross Rd, WC2 (020 7369 1736).*

BRAND Adrian Noble's final production as artistic director of the RSC is Ibsen's epic verse drama. Ralph Fiennes, as the uncompromising young priest who prea[illegible] mother, wife & son, heads a cast of RSC & National Theatre veterans that includes Oliver Cotton, [illegible] Engel & Alan David. May 29-Aug [illegible] *Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1 (0870 901 3356).*

CALAMITY JANE This 1953 movie musical was a shameless attempt to cash in on *Annie Get Your Gun*, but the image of a trigger-happy [illegible] & tumble Doris Day endures. For this touring revival Toyah Willcox now gets on the "Deadwood St[illegible] heads for the "Windy Cit[illegible] & declares she has a "Secret Love" in a show that makes up for its dated humour with an [illegible] bouncy score. Opens June 19 [illegible] *bury Theatre, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2 (0870 906 3798).*

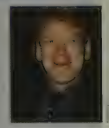
CORIOLANUS/MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR Two RSC touring productions get a welcome London run. For *Coriolanus*, the director David Farr presents Rome as a samurai society with gong[illegible] kimonos, a shivering percussion, a blood-red floor & gory battle scen[illegible] Greg Hicks is thrilling & incisive as the mob-hating Roman leader undone by his own pride in an emotionally exhilarating staging. Hicks also almost steals th[illegible] Dr Caius in Rachel Kavanaugh's enjoyable *Merry Wives*, set just after World War II, with Richard Corden as a delightful Falstaff & the wives spiritedly played by Claire Carrie & Lucy Tregear. In repertory t[illegible] June 6-Aug 3[illegible] *(0870 609 1171).*

JUMPERS Tom Stoppard's 1972 play is revived by David Leveaux. Simon Russell Beale plays the philosopher preparing a lectur[illegible] on the existence of God while his former musical star wife tries to hide the corpse of a murdered acrobat in her bedroom. Moral debate, marital drama & murder mystery. Opens June 19. *Lyttelton, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (020 7452 3000).*



Sunday girl: Denise Van Outen is a broken-hearted Brit in the Big Apple in *Tell Me on a Sunday*.

BRANAGH BACK ON THE BOARDS



It's been 11 years since Kenneth Branagh was last seen on the London stage. But then the 42-year-old actor has been busy directing and starring in various television and film productions as well as directing the hit Morecambe and Wise tribute show *The Play What I Wrote*. Now he's about to make his National Theatre debut in the title role of *Edmond*, David Mamet's early play about a middle-class businessman's descent into madness, lust and murder.

It's a far cry from such classical roles as *Henry V* that made Branagh's name at the Royal Shakespeare Company in the 1980s. But Branagh now wants to attract a younger audience to the theatre, a decision that prompted him not to make his long-awaited return to the British boards in the West End but at the Sheffield Crucible as *Richard III* last year.

Edmond, directed by Peter Hall's son Edward, is part of an initiative by the National's new artistic director Nicholas Hytner to offer cheaper tickets, with two-thirds of the seats at the Olivier Theatre being £10 each. He admits that Branagh's NT debut "will certainly be a departure" for the actor. "It's a particularly savage play, one that punches you in the face. But Ken has experience and authority in a big theatre, which is something I felt we really needed here. He has a kind of energy, intelligence and charisma that has long been missing at the National." Edmond *opens in July at the Olivier, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (020 7452 3000).*

IAN JOHNS

SUMMER READING

Three fascinating new books celebrate the Thames, Mount Everest and Queen Victoria. By Laura Richardson.

LIQUID HISTORY: THE THAMES THROUGH TIME
STEPHEN CROAD

BT Batsford, £15.99



This remarkable book pays homage to the unique character of Old Father Thames, its presence throughout centuries of upheaval and development, its active role in city life, and its influence on those who live and work alongside it. From the stone at Staines, marking the western boundary of the City of London, to where its waters finally escape to the sea, the story of Britain's most famous river is documented in 187 photographs from English Heritage's archives, many of which have never been seen before. The result is a fascinating glimpse of London's oldest resident: its bustling docks and shipyards, sunny waterside pubs, famous landmarks and the bridges that span its shores. As Michael Aspel might say, River Thames: this is your life.

QUEEN VICTORIA: FIRST MEDIA MONARCH
JOHN PLUNKETT

Oxford University Press, £19.99



John Plunkett's study of the frequently fraught relationship between royalty and the media is the first of its kind to analyse the role of the press in creating and perpetuating the royal image. Using previously unexamined material, Plunkett documents how 19th-century developments in publishing, the emergence of a mass readership and the advent of photography formed a new intimacy between the court and the people. Victoria, who knew a good PR opportunity when she saw one, played along, embarking upon a whirl of social activities and public visits before the cameras. Plunkett's convincing argument concludes that the media was decisive in reinventing the monarchy, turning royals from lofty, aloof figures into "celebrities". At what cost is for you to judge.

EVEREST: 50 YEARS ON TOP OF THE WORLD
GEORGE BAND

Collins, £20

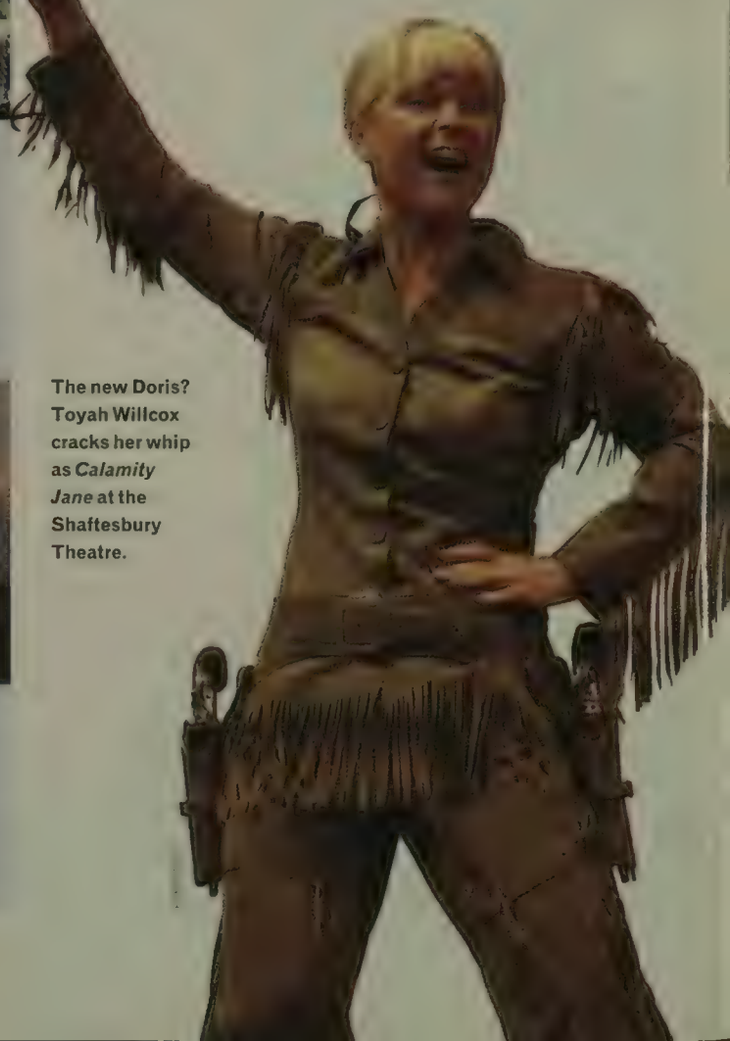


Billed as "the official history", George Band's account of the triumphs and tragedies that have occurred on the peaks of Everest is a compelling insight into the hypnotic lure of the biggest mountain of them all. Band is certainly well placed to recount the story of man's endeavours on Everest, having been a member of the first expedition to reach the summit in 1953. Refreshingly, he does not seek to point the spotlight on himself or any individual climber, no matter how brilliant. The emphasis is on the combined human achievement and the only star of the show is Everest itself. The success of the 1953 trip is seen in the wider context of all the expeditions that preceded it and those that followed, paying tribute to the amazing courage of the climbers who risk all for a chance to stand on top of the world.

THE MASTER BUILDER Ibsen's late great play exploring self-doubt & idealism has Patrick Stewart as Solness, the ageing architect haunted by the people he trod down on his way to the top, including his wife (Sue Johnston), yet terrified of the new generation snapping at his heels. Lisa Dillon is the fervent woman who offers redemption by inspiring him to fatal new heights. Opens June 9. *Albery, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (020 7369 1730).*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM A favourite Shakespeare at the Open Air Theatre starts off the latest repertory season with a new production by Michael Pennington (from June 2). It's followed by Rachel Kavanaugh's staging of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (from June 4) & Ian Talbot directing the Cole Porter musical *High Society* (from July 22). *Granny & the Gorilla*, Stuart Paterson's play for children, joins the repertoire from July 30. The season runs until Sept 6. *Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park, NW1 (020 7486 2431).*

PACIFIC OVERTURES An all-male Chicago company of 10 performs a



The new Doris? Toyah Willcox cracks her whip as *Calamity Jane* at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

chamber version of Stephen Sondheim & John Weidman's 1976 musical, which mixes Kabuki & Western styles in its story of the westernisation of Japan from the arrival of the first American gunboats in the 1850s. The music, which includes lovely airs & wicked pastiches of Gilbert & Sullivan jingoism, sets the mood & drives the story. June 20-Aug 23. *Donmar Warehouse, Earlham St, WC2 (020 7369 1732).*

RICHARD II This year the Globe features not only a mixed-sex & an all-male company but an all-female troupe as well. The new repertory season is currently under way with Tim Carroll's all-male *Richard II* with Mark Rylance, followed by Barry Kyle's all-female *Richard III* starring Kathryn Hunter (from May 25). It's followed by Christopher Marlowe's rarely performed *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (from June 6), directed by Tim Carroll, & Timothy Walker's production of *Edward II* (from July 20). Janet McTeer's Petruchio tries to tame Kathryn Hunter's Kate in Barry Kyle's staging of *The Taming of the Shrew* (from Aug 10). The season runs until Sept 28. *Shakespeare's Globe, Bankside, SE1 (020 7401 9919).*

SEXUAL PERVERSITY IN CHICAGO David Mamet's caustic 1974 comedy, his breakthrough play, gets a starry revival with Matthew Perry (Chandler in *Friends*), Minnie Driver & excellent Hollywood supporting player Hank Azaria. The play is fast, funny & witheringly obscene in its relentless exposure of how two young professional men resent & belittle the women in their lives for their unforgivable power to make men feel soft, vulnerable & needy. Lindsay Posner directs. *Comedy, Panton St, SW1 (020 7369 1731).*

TELL ME ON A SUNDAY This 1982 solo song-cycle by Andrew Lloyd-Webber & Don Black, about an "ordinary British girl" being let down by a series of men in New York, has been expanded with five new songs and updated (references to DVDs, emails etc) by comedienne Jackie Clune. It's short on characterisation but Denise Van Outen as the Brit in the Big Apple delivers it all with an engaging panache. *Gielgud, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (020 7494 5065).*



Kenneth MacMillan's much-loved *Manon* is performed by the Royal Ballet, above, while the youngest members of Nederlands Dans Theater offer a mixed bill, below right.

dance

Exciting work comes from Carlos Acosta's Cuban troupe & Twyla Tharp's new American company. The Royal Ballet continues to celebrate Kenneth MacMillan, & Nederlands Dans Theater showcases its young members.

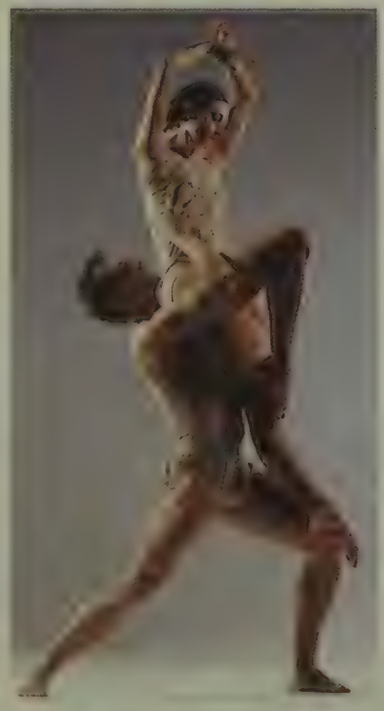
CARLOS ACOSTA The leading Cuban dancer, with a company of 17, presents his new work, *Tocororo: A Cuban Tale*, in which a son leaves the traditional confines of the countryside for the big city. July 15-26. *Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (020 7863 8000).*

NEDERLANDS DANS THEATER 2 Featuring the youngest of the NDT's troupe, aged between 17 & 22, the company performs work by Jiri Kilian, Johan Inger, Ohad Naharin & a new piece by British choreographer Paul Lightfoot. May 28-31. *Sadler's Wells, see above.*

ROYAL BALLET As part of the company's Kenneth MacMillan retrospective, his much-loved *Manon* is currently in repertory until May 31. A mixed bill features MacMillan's *Scènes de Ballet* & *Song of the Earth* as well as a new work by David Bintley (until May 29), with Alina Cojocara/Johan Kobborg & Tamara Rojo/Jonathan Cope. It is followed by MacMillan's *Romeo & Juliet* (June 4-14), with Cojocara/Kobborg & Darcey Bussell/Roberto Bolle. *Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (020 7304 4000).*

SPANISH NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY Flamenco, tango & other regional Spanish dances intertwine for *Fuenteovejuna*. Antonio Gades' dance version of a Lope de Vega play for 35 dancers & 10 on-stage musicians. June 16-22. *Sadler's Wells, see above.*

TWYLA THARP DANCE The top American choreographer offers a triple bill with her new company. *Surfer at the River Styx* is loosely based on Euripides' *The Bacchae* to a percussive score; *Sinatra Suite*, originally created for Baryshnikov, has ballroom dancing set to such classics as "My Way", & *Westerly Round* blends classical & folk dance to music by Mark O'Connor. July 2-5. *Sadler's Wells, see above.*





film

In a summer of sequels *The Matrix Reloaded* is the most eagerly anticipated, while Jack Nicholson loses his cool in *Anger Management*, Julia Roberts looks for love in *Full Frontal* & John Malkovich acts deadly in *Ripley's Game*.

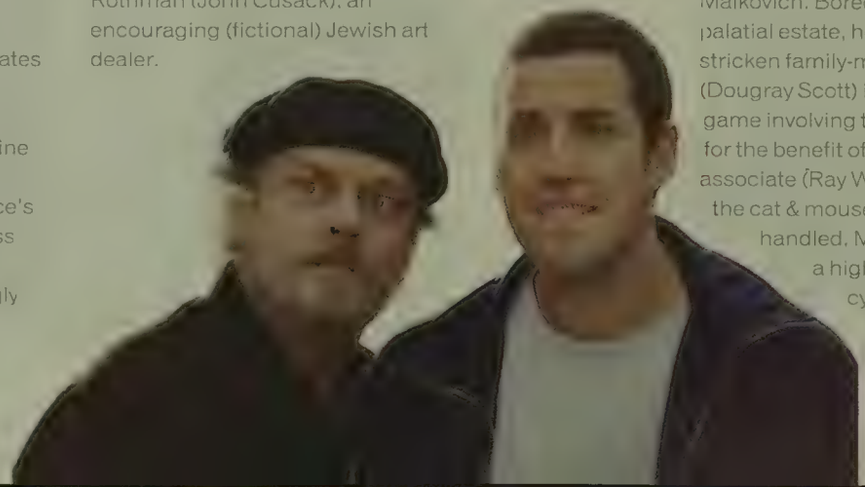
ANGER MANAGEMENT After *About Schmidt* gave us a soulful Jack Nicholson, the actor now lets rip with pumping temples, volcanic tantrums & shark-tooth grins as a seemingly mad psychiatrist who treats Adam Sandler, a mild-mannered businessman sentenced to therapy after being accused of air rage. Look out for racket-tossing tennis star John McEnroe in an enraged cameo. Opens June 6.

FULL FRONTAL Eight self-absorbed, self-deluded Hollywood types take turns searching for idealised love in Steven Soderbergh's stylised, semi-improvised movie that both irritates & intrigues. His digital camera skitters among storylines—including Julia Roberts' magazine writer falling for the actor she's interviewing & David Hyde Pierce's screenwriter caught in a loveless marriage—that range from the archly satirical to the surprisingly affecting. Opens May 23

THE MATRIX RELOADED In a summer that includes *Charlie's Angels 2*, *Terminator 3*, *Tomb Raider 2*, *Spy Kids 3* & *Legally Blond 2*, the most eagerly anticipated sequel is the continuing story of Keanu Reeves' Messiah-like hero battling the machines that have enslaved mankind in a virtual world. Expect the same amalgam of comic-book influences, Eastern philosophy & martial arts that rewrote the action genre in the original film, but with freshly eye-popping special effects, a set-piece free-for-all motorway chase, & a cliffhanging ending leading to the second *Matrix* sequel, out in November. Opens May 23.

MAX This provocative historical fantasy suggests that Adolf Hitler became a dictator because he failed as a painter. Noah Taylor (the young pianist in *Shine*) plays the Nazi leader-to-be as an antisocial, inept young man frustrated by the expectations placed on him by Max Rothman (John Cusack), an encouraging (fictional) Jewish art dealer.

Is he still "the one"? Keanu Reeves is back in black in *The Matrix Reloaded*, above. Below, Jack Nicholson tries to teach Adam Sandler some *Anger Management*.



Although it's impossible to contemplate Hitler in a two-hour fictional film, there are many intriguing ideas here & two superb lead performances. Opens June 13.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY Having turned Jane Austen's *Emma* into a briskly enjoyable film (with Gwyneth Paltrow), writer-director Douglas McGrath manages to do the same for Charles Dickens' sprawling novel by giving us all the major plot points without the tangential coincidences. It's picturesque entertainment with a fine cast, including Christopher Plummer (superb as Nicholas' cruel uncle), Tom Courtenay, Jim Broadbent & Juliet Stevenson. Opens June 27.

RIPLEY'S GAME Based on Patricia Highsmith's third novel in the Tom Ripley series, this thriller finds her anti-hero, last seen on screen with Matt Damon in the 1950s-set *The Talented Mr Ripley*, now a seasoned & wealthy crook, played by John Malkovich. Bored living on his palatial estate, he dupes his cancer-stricken family-man neighbour (Dougray Scott) into a murderous game involving the Russian Mafia for the benefit of a slimy former associate (Ray Winstone). Although the cat & mouse plot is slackly handled, Malkovich makes for a highly watchable cynical villain. Opens May 30.



New takes on the Nativity: Willard White & Dawn Upshaw in John Adams' *El Nino.*

music

The UK finally gets to see André Previn's opera *A Streetcar Named Desire* & John Adams' oratorio *El Nino*, staged by Peter Sellars. Youth abounds with the Opera Babes & Nick Cave but proving that experience still counts are Tony Bennett, Lou Reed & Dave Brubeck.

ALBERT HALL
Kensington Gore, SW7 (020 7589 8212).

Ibrahim Ferrer A Buena Vista Social Club favourite. May 31.

Space Spectacular The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Anthony Inglis performs music from such movies as *Star Wars*, *Superman* & *Star Trek*, as well as pieces from Holst's *The Planets*. June 20.

Tony Bennett Still losing his heart in San Francisco. July 3 & 4.

BARBICAN HALL
Silk Street, EC1 (020 7638 8891).

Dave Brubeck The jazz veteran with the London Symphony Orchestra. May 24.

Lou Reed Rock's venerable balladeer. May 28.

Les Boréades William Christie conducts Les Arts Florissants for a concert rendition of Rameau's last great opera. Anna Maria Panzarella sings the role of the queen torn between her chosen groom & the man she really loves. June 19.

A Streetcar Named Desire André Previn's opera based on Tennessee Williams' play receives its UK premiere in a semi-staged production. The composer leads the LSO, with Renée Fleming as Blanche DuBois & Rodney Gilfry as Stanley Kowalski. June 25 & 27.

El Nino John Adams leads the BBC Symphony orchestra for the UK premiere of his oratorio *El Nino*, which explores the Nativity from biblical, Hispanic & female perspectives. Staged by Peter Sellars, the soloists include Willard White & Dawn Upshaw. June 26 & 28.

HAMMERSMITH APOLLO
Queen Caroline St, W6 (0870 400 0870).

Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds Introspective rock balladry. June 6-7.

Bonnie Raitt Superb bluesy country singer-songwriter. June 20.

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
South Bank Centre, SE1 (020 7960 4242).

Michael Nyman With the BBC Concert Orchestra, the composer & pianist performs music from his soundtracks, including *The Piano*, *Gattaca*, *Prospero's Books* & *The Draughtsman's Contract*. June 17.

Opera Babes Former buskers Karen England (mezzo) & Rebecca Knight (soprano) are joined by the BBC Concert Orchestra led by Carl Davis. July 4.

AHEAD OF HER TIME

Ever the style icon, the Queen's sartorial elegance is the subject of scrutiny throughout the world. A unique exhibition at Kensington Palace will celebrate the accessories that have complemented the outfits Her Majesty has worn during some of the most significant occasions of her life and reign.

For most of us, hats are usually reserved for weddings, but for the Queen, they are an everyday part of her wardrobe. Over 70 of her hats, along with a selection of her handbags, are being displayed to provide a fascinating glimpse inside the royal closet.

From the fabulous to the functional, the hats on display range from an elegant tiara dripping with feathers and pearls to a multicoloured pillbox emblazoned with a bold smarties pattern. All have been selected to represent the very best of British craftsmanship and are accompanied by sketches and photographs to demonstrate the complete design process.

Hats and Handbags: Accessories from the Royal Wardrobe. May 23, 2003-April 18, 2004. Kensington Palace, Kensington Gardens, W8. Daily 10am-6pm. £10.20, children £6.60 (0870 751 5170).

Laura Richardson



opera

Placido Domingo & Angela Gheorghiu lead a starry revival of *I Pagliacci* at the Royal Opera. ENO, saved for now from bankruptcy, make a Trojan effort with Berlioz. Simon Rattle conducts a new *Idomeneo* from Peter Sellars at Glyndebourne.

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA
London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (020 7632 8300).
The Trojans at Carthage The second part of Berlioz's epic, directed by Richard Jones, finds the Trojans in exile & love between Dido & Aeneas, sung by John Daszak & Susan Parry. In repertory until June 7.
Tristan & Isolde David Rendall & Susan Bullock are the doomed lovers in David Alden's staging which adopts a minimalist, dream-like setting. In repertory from May 24-June 8.

OPERA HOLLAND PARK
Holland Park Theatre, W8 (0845 230 9769)
The new repertory season opens with Beethoven's *Fidelio*, directed by Olivia Fuchs (June 10-28), & Puccini's *Tosca* (June 14-27) in a production by James Robert Carson. Tom Hawkes directs Massenet's darkly brooding romantic tragedy, *Werther* (July 1-19), based on a Goethe novel, & Jamie Hayes stages Francesco Cilea's third opera *L'arlesiana* (July 3-18), originally made famous by the tenor role being sung by Caruso. The repertoire is later joined by Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (July 22-Aug 9) directed by Nik Ashton, & Martin Lloyd-Evans' staging of Verdi's *Stiffelio* (July 24-Aug 8), in which a Protestant minister eventually forgives his adulterous wife.

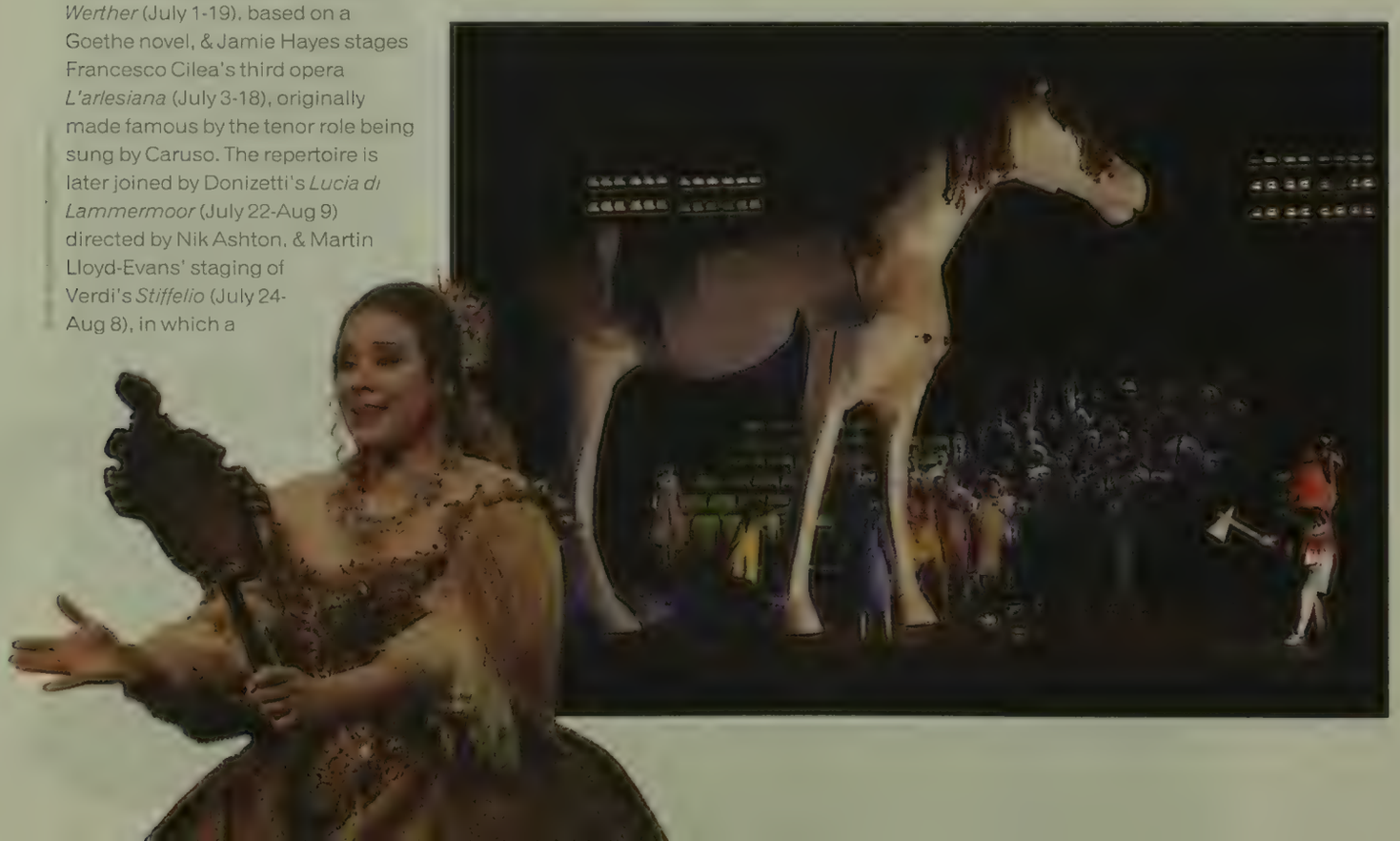
ROYAL OPERA
Covent Garden, WC2 (020 7304 4000).
Hamlet Ambroise Thomas' French version of Shakespeare, directed by Patrice Caurier & Mosher Leiser, has Simon Keenlyside as the troubled Prince, Natalie Dessay as Ophelie & Robert Lloyd as Claudius. In repertory until May 30.
Lohengrin Revival of Elijah Moshinsky's 1977 Wagner staging with Robert Dean Smith as the titular knight & Melanie Diener as his curious wife Elsa. Mark Elder conducts. In repertory from June 3-24.
Die Zauberflöte David McVicar directs Mozart's magical opera with Paul Groves as Tamino & Camilla Tilling as Pamina. In repertory from June 14-July 9.
Semele John Copley's staging of Handel's baroque drama returns with Ruth Ann Swenson as the titular mistress of Jupiter (Kurt Streit) who falls foul of his vengeful wife Juno (Stephanie Blythe). In repertory from June 25-July 11.
I Pagliacci A starry cast has been assembled for Franco Zeffirelli's production, with Placido Domingo as the leader of a troupe of travelling players who takes revenge on his unfaithful wife (Angela Gheorghiu) & her lover (Dmitri Hvorostovsky). In repertory from July 10-20.

OUT OF TOWN

GARSINGTON OPERA
Garsington Manor, Garsington, Oxon (01865 361636).
Three comic operas make up this year's summer offerings. Marco Gandini directs Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (June 18-July 12), with Luca Salsi as Figaro. Richard Strauss' *Die Schweigsame Frau* (June 14-July 10) is staged by David Fielding, & Paul Curran's production of Mozart's opera buffa *La Finta Giardiniera* (June 26-July 11) has soprano Lisa Saffer as the countess who disguises herself as a gardener to seek out her long-lost lover.

GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL OPERA
Glyndebourne, Lewes, E Sussex (01273 813 813).
Wagner has finally come to Glyndebourne with Nikolaus Lehnoff's production of *Tristan und Isolde* (in repertory until July 4) & David McVicar's *La Bohème* (until July 1) is back, conducted by Mark Wigglesworth. Simon Rattle conducts a new *Idomeneo* (June 10-July 26), directed by Peter Sellars with designs by Anish Kapoor. Graham Vick's staging of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (July 6-Aug 24) is revived, a new *Die Fledermaus* (July 27-Aug 30) is directed by Stephen Lawless, & Peter Sellars directs Handel's *Theodora* (Aug 10-31). The season runs until Aug 31.

Mane attraction: *The Trojans at Carthage*, below. Below left, Ruth Ann Swenson in *Semele*.





RIGHT IMAGE BY GUY BOURDIN C1 ...

exhibitions

Latest additions to the London scene are the new Fashion & Textile Museum, near London Bridge, & the long-awaited Museum in Docklands near Canary Wharf. The renowned Saatchi Collection—now in its new home on the banks of the Thames—shows Damien Hirst & Tate Britain examines Bridget Riley's work.

Readers are advised to check dates & times before making a special journey.

FASHION & TEXTILE MUSEUM
83 Bermondsey St, SE1 (020 7403 0222).
My Favourite Dress The new museum, in a dazzling pink-&-orange building, shows off 70 creations by the world's top designers, each invited to nominate their own favourite & to reveal the inspiration that went into its making. *Until Nov. Tues-Sun 11am-5.45pm.*

MUSEUM IN DOCKLANDS
West India Quay, Hertsmere Rd, E14 (020 7001 9800).
In a warehouse once used to store sugar, coffee & rum is a new permanent exhibition devoted to the history of the Thames, its port & its people from Roman times to the rise of Canary Wharf. In an interactive gallery, children can winch & weigh cargoes & have a diver's-eye view of work carried out underwater. Opens May 24. *Daily 10am-6pm.*

NATIONAL GALLERY
Trafalgar Sq, WC2 (020 7747 2885).
A Private Passion: Harvard's Winthrop Collection 19th-century art collected in the 1920s & 30s by New York financier Grenville L Winthrop. Among European & American artists featured are Blake, Renoir, Rossetti, Whistler & Sargent &, particularly, Ingres. June 25-Sept 14. *Daily 10am-6pm (Wed until 9pm).*

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS
Piccadilly, W1 (020 7300 8000).
Summer Exhibition The popular annual pot-pourri of sculpture & paintings, chosen from works submitted by amateur as well as by famous artists. June 2-August 10.
Kirchner: Expressionism & the City More than 100 paintings, drawings, prints & sculpture by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, one of the leading artists of German Expressionism. June 28-Sept 21. *Daily 10am-6pm (Fri until 10pm).*

A Mini adventure: Damien Hirst's dotty ideas are showcased at the new Saatchi Gallery on the South Bank, above. Top, fantasy and fashion from photographer Guy Bourdin at the V&A.

SAATCHI GALLERY
County Hall, SE1 (020 7823 2363).
Damien Hirst Sculptures, installations, paintings, & films by one of Britain's best-known contemporary artists. Alongside the now-renowned pickled animals are works on some of Hirst's other favourite motifs & topics: polka-dot patterns & pharmaceutical themes. Until August 31. *Daily 10am-6pm (Fri, Sat until 10pm).*

SCIENCE MUSEUM
Exhibition Rd, SW7 (0870 870 4868).
Titanic: The Artefact Exhibition Items recovered from the wreck of the *Titanic*, plus full-sized recreations of some of her luxurious interiors. There is also a look at the ship's design & at the scientific techniques used to collect the artefacts from the ocean floor. Until Sept 28. *Daily 10am-6pm.*

TATE BRITAIN
Millbank, SW1 (020 7887 8008).
Bridget Riley Major exhibition devoted to the career of the 70-year-old British artist, from her black-&-white "op-art" of the early 1960s & her later colourful abstracts to the wall-drawings she produces today—including one specially created for the exhibition. June 26-Sept 28. *Daily 10am-5.40pm.*

TATE MODERN
Bankside, SE1 (020 7887 8008).
Cruel & Tender Images captured by some of the world's greatest 20th-century reality photographers, ranging from Walker Evans' "American photographs" to Robert Adams' views of Denver's urban sprawl. June 5-Sept 7. *Daily 10.15am-6pm (Fri, Sat until 10pm).*

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM
Cromwell Rd, SW7 (020 7942 2000).
Art Deco 1910-1939 Examples of the vibrant, enduringly popular style that dominated painting, sculpture, architecture, textiles, graphic art, fashion & film. Until July 20.
Guy Bourdin Paintings, drawings, Polaroid images & personal cine films explore visions of fantasy & suspense created by one of the greatest innovators in fashion photography. Until Aug 17. *Daily 10am-5.45pm (Wed until 10pm).*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SIR JOHN SOANE

Described as "a brilliant marriage between architecture and art" by Jacques Herzog, designer of Tate Modern, the Sir John Soane Museum is gearing up for some major celebrations this year in honour of the 250th anniversary of the distinguished architect's birth.

Soane, who counted the Bank of England and Dulwich Picture Gallery among his many credits, was determined that his home, in which he established an enviable collection of art and antiques, should become a museum accessible to "students and amateurs", a wish protected ever since by an Act of Parliament.

Spread across numbers 12, 13 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Museum has recently been granted the funds to begin an extensive phase of restoration. Number 14 is set to have a £1.3 million facelift to return it to its original 1824 Soane design, due for completion in August 2004. The three courtyard areas are also being restored this year, thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The renovations coincide with a year-long programme of exhibitions, lectures and events to celebrate Soane's birth. *14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2 (020 7405 2107).*

Laura Richardson







festivals

London offers all manner of music, international theatre & street entertainment. Peter Stein stages Chekhov with Fiona Shaw, Christopher Wheeldon has new work with San Francisco Ballet in Edinburgh, & Elton John makes his debut at Hampton Court.

CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL This year's eclectic offerings, to be found in locations ranging from St Paul's Cathedral to the City's livery halls, is based around the theme of cultural exchange between London, New York & Shanghai. Highlights include a multimedia collaboration between pianist Joanna MacGregor & jazz saxophonist Andy Sheppard, Jan Garbarek & the Hilliard Ensemble, the Nashville-based gospel group Take 6, Julian Joseph & his big band, & seven world premieres of choral work as part of 12 daily concerts at 6pm in the City's churches. June 23-July 10. *Box office: Barbican Centre, Silk St, EC2 (0845 120 7502).*

HAMPTON COURT PALACE FESTIVAL Elton John makes his festival debut in two concerts. Other artists include tenor José Carreras, violinist Nigel Kennedy, Jools Holland with his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra, & ballerina Darcey Bussell, who will perform in a specially designed theatre built in the Base Court of the Palace. June 10-21. *Box office: Hampton Court Palace, Surrey KT8 9AU (020 8781 9545).*

LIFT The London International Festival of Theatre is currently offering a midsummer season of family orientated shows in various venues. Productions include Cambodian shadow puppetry; a Lithuanian *Midsummer Night's Dream*; Scottish TAG Theatre Company's *King Matt*; a lively children's adventure involving an 11-year-old monarch; & *Strange Familiars* featuring song, poetry & music from refugees & asylum seekers aged between 16 & 24 from Africa, the Balkans & the Middle East. Until June 21. *LIFT box office: 020 8763 8012.*

LUFTHANSA FESTIVAL OF BAROQUE MUSIC Handel is a featured composer this year with the sacred oratorio *La Resurrezione* from The English Concert under Trevor Pinnock, Italy's Ensemble Zefiro performing his ever-popular *Water Music* & the virtuoso German orchestra Freiburg Baroque & the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, joining for the English pastoral ode *L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato*. Westminster Abbey features choral music by Purcell & Bach with soloists Emma Kirkby, Charles Humphries, Rufus Muller & Roderick Williams. Westminster Abbey Choir & the festival's resident orchestra. St James' Baroque, conducted by James O'Donnell. British debuts include the soprano Salome Haller, countertenor Robert Expert & the French ensemble Les Folies Françoises. June 7-23. *Box office: St John's Smith Sq, London SW1 (020 7222 1061).*

SPITALFIELDS FESTIVAL With its usual home of Christ Church being renovated, the festival will be roaming the East End, including Shoreditch Church, Wilton's Music Hall & Wesley's Chapel. The season, which includes work & talks inspired by the Huguenots, opens with the Choir of King's College Cambridge, sacred music from Russia & Arvo Part's prelude to Rachmaninov's *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*. Other artists include Richard Rodney Bennett in cabaret, the Adelphi Saxophone Quartet & the Britten Sinfonia. June 9-27. *Box office: 75 Brushfield Street, London E1 (020 7377 1362).*

WATCH THIS SPACE The National Theatre's annual free outdoor summer fiesta in its Theatre Square has early evening music every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Saturday. International street theatre every Thursday, Friday & Saturday lunchtime & early evening, includes the acrobatic trio Mimbre, the Catalan dance troupe Senza Tempo, & 10.30pm theatrical events on selected Saturdays. June 28 promises a spectacular collaboration between pyrotechnic geniuses The World Famous & surreal pranksters Peepolykus. June 20-August 23. *National Theatre Square, South Bank, SE1. Recorded information: 020 7452 3327.*

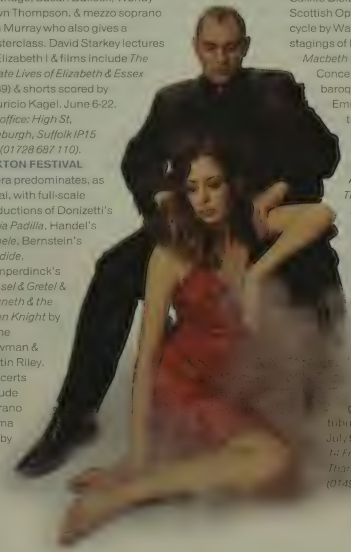
OUT OF TOWN

ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL OF MUSIC & ARTS The 56th season includes Britten's *Gloriana* with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Richard Hickox & performances by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Arditti Quartet, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Ades & the Belcea Quartet. There are recitals by Robert Tear, Ian Bostridge, Susan Bullock, Wendy Dawn Thompson, & mezzo soprano Ann Murray who also gives a masterclass. David Starkey lectures on Elizabeth I & films include *The Private Lives of Elizabeth & Essex* (1939) & shorts scored by Mauricio Kagel. June 6-22. *Box office: High St, Aldeburgh, Suffolk IP15 5LS (01728 687 110).*

BUXTON FESTIVAL Opera predominates, as usual, with full-scale productions of Donizetti's *Maria Padilla*, Handel's *Semele*, Bernstein's *Candide*, Humperdinck's *Hansel & Gretel & Gwyneth & the Green Knight* by Lynne Plowman & Martin Riley. Concerts include soprano Emma Kirkby with English Baroque, the Northern Chamber Orchestra & the Seven Saints Choir from Bulgaria. Featured singers in recital include Ann Murray, Christopher Maltman & Tom Randle, while sopranos Janis Kelly & Linda Kitchen give a two-woman version of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Speakers in the festival's literary strand include Robert Winston, Tom Stoppard, Michael Frayn, Claire Tomalin, Sue MacGregor & Germaine Greer. July 5-20. *Box office: 5 Th Square, Buxton SK17 6AZ (0845 12 72190).*

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL Dance highlights include Cullberg Ballet with pieces by Johan Inger & Mats Ek; San Francisco Ballet with work by British choreographer Christopher Wheeldon; & Bordeaux Opera Ballet with classics from the era of Les Ballets Russes. Peter Stein directs Chekhov's *The Seagull* with Fiona Shaw & Iain Glen; ambitious Scottish playwright David Greig's new play *San Diego* has its premiere; & controversial Catalan director Calixto Bieito stages *Hamlet*. Scottish Opera presents its full *Ring* cycle by Wagner & there are concert stagings of Rossini's *Zelmira*, Verdi's *Macbeth* & Wagner's *Lohengrin*. Concerts range from French baroque by Ian Bostridge & Emmanuelle Haim to traditional Korean music, & the Los Angeles Philharmonic has a week's residency. August 10-30. *Box office: The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh EH1 2NE (0131 473 2000).*

HENLEY FESTIVAL The banks of the Thames will be ringing to the sounds of jazz, classical, opera & rock. The line-up includes Lesley Garrett, American jazz vocalist Stacey Kent, opera favourite Bryn Terfel, & Bob Geldof & his new band. A kitschy finale is guaranteed with Abba tribute band Björn Again. July 9-13. *Box office: 1 Friday St, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1AH (01491 843404).*



Festival fun: the entertainment on offer ranges from theatrical spectaculars such as Viramundo at Watch This Space, above left, to Handel's *Semele* at Buxton, below.

THREE NEWLY OPENED HOMES WELCOME VISITORS

"The country house is Britain's unique contribution to tourism worldwide. Nowhere else is the conception of the home found with such richness and humanity of content, or with such endless variety, in harmony with the fine arts and the cognate arts of gardening, landscape, architecture and husbandry." With these words, author and owner of Scotney Castle, Christopher Hussey, perfectly illustrates the central importance of the stately home in Britain's heritage.

When the National Trust was founded in 1895 to preserve the tradition of the stately home, it also tapped in to the peculiar obsession we Brits have with poking around other people's houses. This year the Trust is opening three new—and very different—properties to the ever-curious public.

RED HOUSE

Bexleyheath, in south-east London, may seem an unlikely location for a cultural gem, but the opening of Red House should prove otherwise. The building was designed by Philip Webb and commissioned by William Morris, two of the founders of the Arts & Crafts Movement, and for some years was a forum for the bright young things of the movement to gather and swap ideas. Many of the design ideas that emerged from that period stemmed from Red House. Morris's famous floral wallpaper and fabric designs, copied throughout the world, were inspired by the gardens there, and Webb's use of space, light and natural materials marked a significant change in direction from the dark, formal Victorian style of the time. It opens to the public for the first time this summer. *Check the Trust's website for announcement of opening date and times www.nationaltrust.org.uk.*

TYNTESFIELD

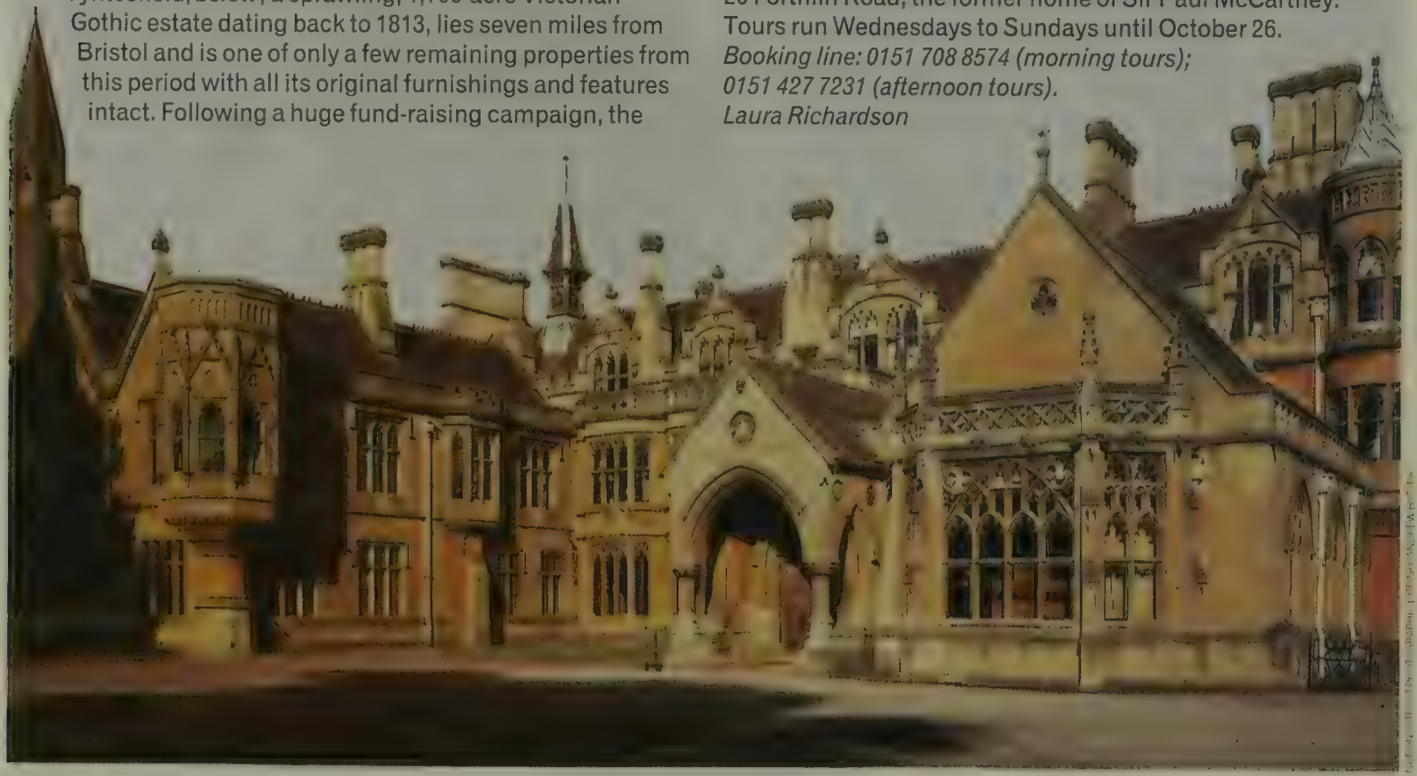
Tyntesfield, *below*, a sprawling, 1,700-acre Victorian Gothic estate dating back to 1813, lies seven miles from Bristol and is one of only a few remaining properties from this period with all its original furnishings and features intact. Following a huge fund-raising campaign, the National Trust acquired the 35-bedroom, Grade I-listed building and surrounding parklands last year and the first guided tours recently took place. The project is the largest restoration effort ever undertaken by the Trust, and such is the excitement surrounding Tyntesfield that they have decided to open the house and gardens "years before they would normally be on show", according to project director John McVerry, offering visitors a rare chance to view preservation in the making. The tours run four days a week until November 9. Reservations essential. *Telephone 0870 241 4500—directions to the house will be given on booking.*



MENDIPS

Not all of the National Trust's properties are grand country piles. Mendips, *above*, may sound like a rural mansion, but in fact it is the name of John Lennon's childhood home in Liverpool, which Yoko Ono Lennon recently donated to the Trust. Open to the public for the first time this year, Mendips, at 251 Menlove Avenue, was Lennon's home from the age of five to 23 and, according to Yoko Ono, "the house resonates with a special atmosphere". Lennon composed many of his songs while sitting on the front porch, and this magical mystery tour is the perfect opportunity to view first hand the surroundings that inspired his music. Beatles fans are in for a real treat, as the tour of Mendips is combined with a visit to 20 Forthlin Road, the former home of Sir Paul McCartney. Tours run Wednesdays to Sundays until October 26. *Booking line: 0151 708 8574 (morning tours); 0151 427 7231 (afternoon tours).*

Laura Richardson





DAVID ROGERS/GETTY IMAGES

sport

Top golfers & tennis players will be hitting out for glory on the grass in the Open Championships at Sandwich & Wimbledon, respectively. On the water, the cream of the world's rowers strive to win on the Thames at Henley.

CRICKET

Michael Vaughan & Marcus Trescothick are expected to be among the England team taking on Grant Flower & the rest of the Zimbabwean side in this summer's Test series with—for the first time—a match in the north-east of England, at Chester-le-Street.

England v Zimbabwe 1st npower Test, May 22-26, *Lord's, NW8*; 2nd npower Test, June 5-9, *Riverside, Chester-le-Street, County Durham*; *(0870 90 90 190). www.cricket.org.*

NatWest Series final Climax of the series of one-day matches between England, Zimbabwe & South Africa. July 12. *Lord's (020 7432 1066).*

GOLF

England's Justin Rose will be fighting off challenges to his title in the British Masters', while Tiger Woods & others attempt to wrest the Open Championship from South Africa's Ernie Els.

The Daily Telegraph Damovo British Masters' June 5-8. *Marriott Forest of Arden Golf & Country Club, Meriden, near Coventry, West Midlands (0870 400 7272).*

The Open Championship July 17-20. *Royal St George's Golf Club, Sandwich, Kent (01334 460000). www.europeantour.com*

HORSE RACING

Dressing-up is de rigueur for these, the most elegant events in the racing calendar. Ascot's Gold Cup, or Ladies' Day (June 19) sees the most outrageous hats.

The Vodafone Derby June 7. *Epsom, Surrey (01372 470047). www.epsomderby.co.uk*

Royal Ascot June 17-21. *Ascot, Berks (01344 876876). www.ascot.co.uk*

ROWING

The world's greatest oarsmen & oarswomen will fight for supremacy over the Henley course, measuring one mile 550 yards, in everything from single sculls to coxed eights. Further downriver, first-year watermen row from the City to Chelsea to win the handsome scarlet coat first presented by Irish comedian Thomas Doggett in 1714.

Oar-inspiring: the world's greatest rowers take to the water at Henley, above. Below, Lleyton Hewitt defends his title at Wimbledon.



MIKE HEWITT/GETTY IMAGES

Henley Royal Regatta July 2-6. *Henley-on-Thames, Oxon (01491 572153). www.hrr.co.uk*

Doggett's Coat & Badge July 17, starts 12.45pm. *London Bridge, SE1, to Cadogan Pier, SW3 (020 7626 3531).*

TENNIS

Australian Lleyton Hewitt, having won the Stella Artois three times running & last year's Men's Singles at Wimbledon, seems invincible on grass. Ladies' Singles title-holder Serena Williams will also be defending her crown at Wimbledon.

Stella Artois June 9-15. *Queen's Club, Palliser Rd, W14 (020 7385 3421). www.atptennis.com/london.*

The Championships June 23-July 6. *All England Club, Wimbledon, SW19 (020 8946 2244). championships.wimbledon.org.*

other events

Stirring music & dazzling uniforms are on parade at two of London's most popular traditional events, Beating Retreat & Trooping the Colour. The latest cars & bikes go on show at Canary Wharf & London's private squares open their gardens to visitors.

BEATING RETREAT A spectacular display of military music & precision drill from the Massed Bands of the Household Division. May 27, 28, 7pm. *Horse Guards Parade, SW1 (020 7839 5323).*

CANARY WHARF INTERNATIONAL MOTOR EXPO Around 200 of the newest & fastest cars & motorbikes are shown in the exciting setting of Docklands' modern architecture, in & around Canary Wharf. June 2-7. Daily 10am-6pm. *Canary Wharf, 1 Canada Square, E14 (01225 425 811). www.motorexpo.com.*

LONDON GARDEN SQUARES DAY More than 80 of London's private communal gardens, normally accessible only to surrounding residents, allow visitors behind the railings to admire lawns, statues or stone temples & to enjoy entertainment, exhibitions or teas. June 8. Admission times 10am-6pm or 2-5pm. *Various venues throughout London (details from 020 7839 3969).*

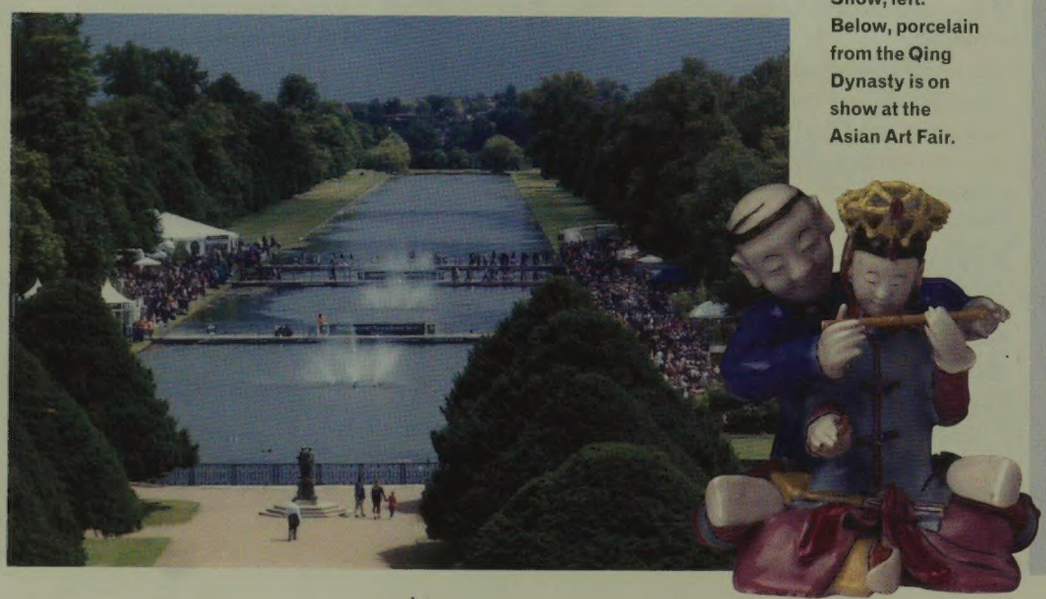
INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS FAIR/ LONDON ASIAN ART FAIR European pottery, porcelain, glass & enamels on sale, a busy programme of talks & a loan exhibition of porcelain from the reign of every Chinese emperor between 1260 & 1911. The concurrent Asian Arts Fair features Oriental furniture, art works & snuff bottles. June 11-14. Wed-Fri 11am-8pm; Sat 11am-3pm. *Commonwealth Centre, Kensington High Street, W8 (020 7734 5491).*

GROSVENOR HOUSE ART & ANTIQUES FAIR One of the most prestigious events in the art & antiques calendar, with roughly 90 international dealers offering around £500 million worth of items. June 11-17. Daily 11am-6pm (Wed, Fri until 8pm). *Le Méridien Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W1 (020 7399 8100).*

TROOPING THE COLOUR The Queen's annual birthday ceremony focuses this year on the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards. June 14. Procession leaves Buckingham Palace at 10.40am for the parade at 11am & returns to Buckingham Palace at 12.15pm. Equally spectacular dress rehearsals take place on the preceding Saturdays, May 31 & June 7. *The Mall, Horse Guards Parade, SW1 (020 7414 2479).*

HAMPTON COURT PALACE FLOWER SHOW This popular event gives the opportunity to buy flowers & plants from 150 specialist nurseries & to admire show & water gardens & the latest garden gadgets. July 8-13 (July 8, 9, RHS members only). Tues-Sat 10am-7.30pm; Sun 10am-5.30pm. *East Molesey, Surrey (advance booking on 0870 906 3791).*

LISTINGS COMPILED BY IAN JOHNS & ANGELA BIRD



GILL SHAW

Planters' paradise: garden inspiration at the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, left. Below, porcelain from the Qing Dynasty is on show at the Asian Art Fair.

CORONATION GEMS



©2009 HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH

Following on from last year's triumphant Jubilee celebrations, events in the capital take on a royal flavour again this summer in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Queen's coronation. Artefacts from the Royal Archives, Royal Library and Royal Photographic Collection have been gathered together to form a special exhibition in the Drawings Gallery at Windsor Castle, portraying the customs and traditions of the coronation ceremony from the 17th century to the present day. An intimate insight into the occasion is gained through items such as King George V's diary and Queen Victoria's sketchbook, filled with her own drawings of the big day. Other exhibits include the Bible upon which George III swore his coronation oath and the pen used by Queen Elizabeth II to sign hers, *above*. March 29-Sept 21. *The Drawings Gallery, Windsor Castle, Windsor. Open daily, but check before making a special journey (020 7321 2233).*

Coronation is also the theme at the Summer Opening of the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace. Ceremony and Celebration: Coronation Day 1953 offers the chance to see the magnificent Coronation Dress and Robe of Estate that Her Majesty wore for the occasion, and is the first public showing of the entire coronation frieze by Feliks Topolski, described as "the greatest artistic chronicler of our times". August 1-Sept 28. *Buckingham Palace, SW1 (020 7321 2233).*

Laura Richardson

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